

Yearly Subscription, \$3.00

Single Number, 75 cents

The Sewanee Review

A Quarterly of Life and Letters

[Founded 1892]

EDITED BY

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER



April-June, 1929

PERIODICAL ROOM
GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIV. OF MICH.

OF GLOTTOTECHNY	Robert Withington
CHILDREN	Bert Roller
FOREVER ENGLAND (<i>sonnet</i>)	Charlotte F. Babcock
THE GREEKS AS HUMANISTS	Henry M. Gass
SHERWOOD ANDERSON	Rachel Smith
BROWNING'S WHITMANISM	G. R. Elliott
THE BIRTH OF THE BRAHMINS	George E. DeMille
AN AMERICAN-BORN EUROPEAN	Abbott C. Martin
SOMETHING ABOUT CABELL	Edward N. Hooker
THE HUMANISM OF JOSEPH CONRAD	Alan R. Thompson
WILLA CATHER	Edward Wagenknecht
BOOK REVIEWS:	
Carlyle Restored	Charles F. Harrold
Concluding Colonel House	Charles F. Mullett
Seventeenth Century Humanism	Austin Warren
Boswell's "Hypochondriack"	Charles E. Brown
Nineteenth Century Thought	Charles F. Mullett

BRIEF REVIEWS.

PUBLISHED BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
SEWANEE, TENNESSEE

Entered at the postoffice at Sewanee, Tenn., as second-class matter.

Contributors to the April Review

Dr. ROBERT WITHINGTON is Professor of English at Smith College and has published *English Pageantry—An Historical Outline* and *In Occupied Belgium*. "Glottotechny" in his title is part of his joke: so don't let it frighten you from reading his essay. And what we say is, Amen!

BERT ROLLER is Professor of English in George Peabody School for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee.

CHARLOTTE M. BABCOCK, who taught English in Simmons College, Boston, has frequently published poems in this REVIEW. Her volume, *Echoes*, published by The Four Seas Company, will shortly be reviewed in these pages. She died in Boston in February, 1929.

HENRY M. GASS, Professor of Greek in the University of the South, was a Rhodes Scholar from Tennessee and has occasionally reviewed books in his field for this REVIEW.

RACHEL SMITH is a member of the English Department of the University of Oregon.

Dr. G. R. ELLIOTT is Professor of English at Amherst College and will shortly publish a volume of critical essays in which will appear the essay which here appears for the first time.

GEORGE E. DEMILLE has frequently published critical essays on American critics in THE SEWANEE REVIEW. He is Superintendent of Schools at Green Island, New York.

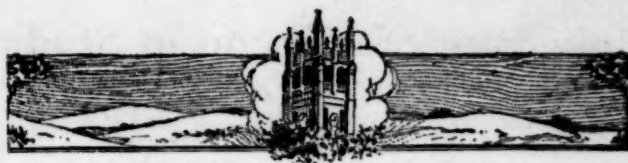
ABBOTT C. MARTIN is Acting Assistant Professor of English in The University of the South. His charming paper, *Patriotism and Fried Chicken* in the January, 1929, number attracted considerable attention in newspapers throughout the South.

EDWARD M. HOOKER received his A.B. from Union College, and A.M. from Syracuse University. He was a member of the English Department of Syracuse University for several years and is now Assistant Professor of English at Holland College, Holland, Michigan.

ALAN R. THOMPSON teaches English in the University of California.

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT is welcomed to THE SEWANEE REVIEW with his essay on *Willa Cather* in this issue. He has published *Values in Literature*, and *Lillian Gish, An Interpretation*. This Spring he will publish through the University of Washington Book Store *Geraldine Farrar: An Authorized Record of Her Career*. He will also publish in the Fall of 1929 *The Man Charles Dickens* (Houghton Mifflin Company) and *A Guide to Bernard Shaw* (D. Appleton & Company). He is a member of the English Department of the University of Washington.

THE SEWANEE REVIEW is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts unaccompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope for their return.



Cultivated People
read
The Sewanee Review



THE SEWANEE REVIEW is widely recognized as a literary review of unusual distinction. It is the oldest quarterly of its kind in the United States. Preserving the fine temper of Southern culture and refinement, it is concerned with the best that has been and is being written in Europe and America.

It is never *merely clever*,
or *controversial*,
or *prejudiced*.

It appeals to people
of *discernment*,
of *intelligence*,
of *culture*.

Its essays by distinguished writers are
marked by a tone of quality.
Its reviews are thoughtful and balanced.

¶ The subscription price for one year is three dollars; the single copy sells for seventy-five cents.
¶ Subscribe to-day for yourself or for a friend.

University of Wisconsin Studies

STUDIES IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

- No. 1.—British Criticisms of American Writings. 1783-1815. By William B. Cairns. Price, 50 cents.

A survey of British comment on American books during the nascent period of American national life, looking forward to an investigation into all aspects of the relations between the intellectual elements of the two nations during the first fifty years of American independence.

- No. 2.—Studies by Members of the English Department. Price, \$1.00.

A volume of miscellaneous papers in various fields of English scholarship; dedicated to Professor F. G. Hubbard on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entering the service of the University.

- No. 5.—Classical Studies in Honor of Charles Forster Smith, by his colleagues. Price, \$1.00.

In Preparation

The Position of the *Roode en Witte Roos* in the Saga of King Richard III, by O. J. Campbell.

Goethe's Lyric Poems in English Translation prior to 1860, by Lucretia Van Tuyl Simmons.

STUDIES IN HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- No. 1.—The Colonial Citizen of New York City, by Robert Francis Seybolt. Price, 50 cents.

A source-study of the essential characteristics of citizenship practice in colonial New York City, indicating by documentary evidence the medieval English ancestry of the citizen of to-day.

Orders should be sent to the SECRETARY OF THE REGENTS, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

The Theology of Personality

By WILLIAM SAMUEL BISHOP, D.D.
Author of *The Development of Trinitarian Doctrine and Spirit and Personality.*

The author's standpoint is that of Anglican Christianity, in which both the Catholic and Protestant factors are included. One of the distinctive features of the work is the effort made, by the application of the psychological method, to interpret the doctrine of the Trinity to the mind of the present day. The distinction is drawn between Catholic dogma in itself and certain unsound developments which are in evidence both in Greek and Latin Catholicism. Written in a clear and readable style, it is a book which deals with many of the important issues that are before the Church today.

\$1.50

Longmans, Green & Co.
55 Fifth Ave. New York City

Say it with flowers

Foy's

Nashville Chattanooga



The University Press of Sewanee Tennessee
PUBLICATIONS

TELL IT IN GATH. By JOSEPH A. OSGOODE. Cloth, 8 vo, pp. 215. Price, postpaid, \$1.50.

The evident intention of the book is, first, to controvert the idea that New England Puritanism is or has been the keystone of the arch of American greatness, and, second, to show the part the South took in the building.

NEW ERA DECLAMATIONS. By Dean Benjamin Brawley. Boards, paper covered, pp. 108. Price, postpaid, 85¢.

Selections, modern, American, and humanitarian, with a Brief Talk on Public Speaking, and Biographical Notes of the Authors.

INTER-AMERICAN ACQUAINTANCES. By Charles Lyon Chandler. Second Edition, cloth, 12 mo., pp. viii, 187. Price, postpaid, \$1.25.

Legions of critics have pronounced it worth while and a book to last.

FOUR WEEKS IN THE MIDST OF THINGS. By Prof. John N. Ware. Paper covers, pp. 165. Price, postpaid, 75¢.

Diary at the outbreak of the War when the author was in Paris. Interesting, and becoming more so.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS of SEWANEE TENNESSEE

Vaughan Hardware Co.

**HARDWARE
IMPLEMENTS
BUGGIES**

Crockery and House Furnishings

WINCHESTER, TENNESSEE

Steed-Leonard Furniture Co.

Office Telephone 96

Residence Telephone 2

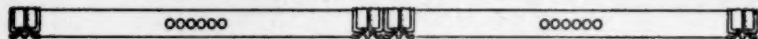
**The Leading Dealer of
Franklin County**

UNDERTAKERS———EMBALMERS

Sewanee Representative:

JOE RILEY

Of Interest to Libraries



THE SEWANEE REVIEW is carrying on the best traditions of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, *De Bow's Review*, and other well-known literary journals of the Old South, and is playing an important rôle in helping to stimulate Southern thought and Southern letters. Its thirty-odd volumes form a rich storehouse of literary essays and literary criticism, ready access to which is to be had through Poole's *Index* and the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*.

THE REVIEW goes into the following college and university libraries: Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Vermont, Tulane, Mississippi, Virginia, Florida, Davidson, Oberlin, Bryn Mawr, Washington and Lee, Leland Stanford, California, Kansas, Kentucky, Iowa, Amherst, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Vassar, North Carolina, South Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, Louisiana, General Theological Seminary, Ohio State, Miami, Oregon, Wofford, Clemson, William and Mary, Washington State, Cornell, Vanderbilt, Texas, Alabama Polytechnic, besides many other public, private, and Normal School libraries throughout the country.

Containing articles on varied topics of literary and educational interest contributed by men and women who write with authority and attractive style, THE SEWANEE REVIEW deserves a place in the reading-room of every school, college, and public library in the Nation.

Every library should strive to train the public in refined taste and critical appreciation. Especially during this time of storm and stress should libraries take advantage of our people's serious mood to encourage steadiness, soberness, and selectiveness in their reading,—habits which mean so much for enlightened minds and worthy character.

YOUR LIBRARY *cannot afford to do without* THE SEWANEE REVIEW, *and we trust that you will send us your subscription without delay.*

Address THE SEWANEE REVIEW,
SEWANEE, TENNESSEE, U. S. A.

THE SEWANEE REVIEW

VOL. XXXVII]

APRIL, 1929

[No. 2

OF GLOTTOTECHNY

We all know what "pyrotechny" is—and the art of making fireworks seems to be spreading to the language. Humpty Dumpty, you remember, juggled with words in a famous conversation with Alice—forgetting, as many of us do, that you cannot always make a word mean what you want it to, even if you pay it extra.

"... And that shows [said Humpty Dumpty] that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—"

"Certainly," said Alice.

"And only *one* for birthday presents you know. There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory'," Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I mean 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you'!"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument'," Alice objected.

"When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all."

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything, so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. "They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs, they're the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—how-

ever, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That's what *I* say!"

"Would you tell me, please," said Alice, "what that means?"

"Now you talk like a reasonable child," said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. "I meant by 'impenetrability' that we've had enough of that subject, and that it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life."

"That's a good deal to make one word mean," Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

"When I make a word do a lot of work like that," said Humpty Dumpty, "I always pay it extra."

Not long ago, our trans-Atlantic friends were amused by the announcement of a new practice in a mid-Western college community, under the caption: "Tradition to Start on Monday". This is somewhat analogous to the recent attempt made by an American magazine of considerable repute to collect from its readers such home-coined words as they felt filled much-needed gaps in our poverty-stricken language, with the implied determination that these neologisms should immediately pass current. And now "I see by the papers", as Mr. Dooley used to say, that the good women of this country, in W. C. T. U. convention assembled, are planning to ostracize the word "liquor"—banishing it completely, exiling it to outer darkness; in short, they have decreed that it shall henceforth become obsolete. *Requiescat in pace!*

Despite the dictionary—which in matters linguistic is losing its authority, anyway—one is tempted to expand the above abbreviation in some such fashion as "Women Convene to Ukase"; but as the few purists among us might object to the verb, we could amend it to "Women Control the Universe" (or think they do, which amounts to the same thing), for we find them like a Canute on the linguistic shore, dictating to words, refusing—as did Humpty Dumpty—to be their slaves.

The thought which underlies all savage taboos is that by doing away with the word, you can abolish the thing. The W. C.

T. U. psychologists should read *Sartor Resartus* again. It is true that words are but the signs of thought; but it does not follow that if the outward sign is done away with, the spiritual substance must evaporate. This the ladies in convention evidently realize: for they have apparently agreed to designate the thing as "poison", and (forgetting that *liquor* may mean any liquid) will characterize him who has partaken too freely of the flowing bowl, as "poisoned". He is quite likely to be, in these Volsteadian days; but I suspect that the ladies use the word in a moral, rather than in a physical, sense.

Having decreed the death of "liquor" (the word), the ladies will doubtless seek to erase all traces of it from the literature of the past. Such words as "beer", "wine", and "spirits"—everything, in short, to which the Prohibitionists, with a fine disregard for the distinctions of meaning, give the generic name "rum"—will soon be meaningless; and it may assist the rising generation to comprehend the thoughts—if not the emotions—of dead poets, if the masterpieces we have read be suitably amended. Dr. Holmes once suffered the alteration of some verses, as readers of the Autocrat will remember; the "slight changes" (quite in line with the most advanced thought) are recorded in the second paper, near the end. I do not need to repeat them in full: the verses begin, in the revised version, you will recall—

Come! fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go
While the *logwood* still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the *decoction* still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the *dye-stuff* shall run.

The Gospels will have to be changed equally slightly, under the new régime: "And when they wanted poison, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no poison. . . . When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made poison, . . . he called the bridegroom and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good poison; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good poison until now."

The W. C. T. U. will have to found an Editorial Department, and it can be kept busy for some time. There are authors, like Dickens, which will have to be put on an Index, for the work of expurgation would be too Herculean even for the Prohibition

editors. Rabelais, too, would join the discard—no great matter, as few read him as it is. It is too bad that there are few rimes for “poison”—or even for the New England variant “p’ison”—for I am afraid the editors of the W. C. T. U. board would find it hard to translate such masterpieces as this of Sheridan’s:

A bumper of good liquor
Will end a contest quicker
Than justice, judge, or vicar,

without changing the thought appreciably.

A bumper of p’ison,
That you can set your spies on—

suggests itself; but already the spirit of the verses has been altered—thus the Women Combat the Usquebaugh. . . .

We have only just begun to talk of an American language, when, behold, we are faced with a wctu dialect—unless, indeed, the two should turn out to be synonymous.

A gentleman in Germany, many years ago, received a Christmas present from his friends in America; and he had great difficulty in getting it from the Custom House because the sender had been ill enough advised to mark the package “Gift”. In the new dialect, the gift of the poet’s gods will be simply referred to as *gifting*—and we can only trust that the police will not be confused.

No one will be arrested for drunkenness any more; the offender will be entered in the police-blotter as “poisoned” (more or less seriously); and it will be necessary to rewrite our penal code, for it is now no offence to be poisoned. There will be, for a time, some confusion in the minds of the newsreaders, should they hear that a lady had poisoned her husband as a step toward murdering him; but the glottotechnicians should worry . . . and the rest of us will soon learn to distinguish—as we do between “le livre” and “la livre” in French. There could be no mistaking the sense in the wctu version of the once-popular song:

“’Tis poison divine that gives us jollity”. . .

So Women Change the Usage—and may good luck attend them! The task they have set themselves is no more difficult than that already assumed by the Anti-Saloon League, and there is no reason why they should not have as good a chance of

succeeding. Indeed, theirs is in some ways an easier task—for it should be less work to remake a language than to modify a moral standard, or revamp human nature. One of the great American humorists of the last century said: "The female woman is one of the greatest institooshuns of which this land can boste"—and we echo his sentiments to-day. But we wonder if the "female woman" is not headed toward extinction. . . .

Glottotechnicians are not, however, confined to the fair sex. The well-meaning Gantrys of our broad land have come to regard "evolution" as a synonym for "atheism"—and are leagued to reject this "faith" from our institutions of learning. Such science as may be taught (should they succeed in establishing a State Church) will be that of Genesis, and even now, as Mr. Shipley tells us, there are many states where teachers hardly dare to use the word in classrooms. Evolution will have as little regard as it has hitherto had for the Canutes who seek to suppress scientific investigations; tides have a way of disregarding legislative dicta, and the sun rises (as we still say) without a thought of those who believe the flatness of the earth. By calling a dog's tail a leg, too many people can be convinced that the canine is a quintuped; and America continues to be the slave of glottotechnicians!

It is, apparently, the word and not the thing that counts in modern America. Are we any more Christian because we insist on having "In God we trust" engraved on our coins? Would we lead any better lives if the Constitution were again amended to include mention of the Deity? We rather fancy that all evils can be cured by amending the Constitution, and that shows our blindness. But we do not fear blindness as much as we fear deafness—for it is the Word that counts. Do our leaders emphasize "the Word", even when most illogical? Soon "logic" will come to mean the study of the Word—or rather the committing of the word to memory, for very little study seems to be required; and Elmer will make the word mean "just what he chooses it to mean—neither more nor less." And the rest of us will accept his interpretation. . . .

"Impenetrability—that's what I say!"

ROBERT WITHINGTON

Northampton, Mass.

CHILDREN

The piercing, at times almost intolerable, pathos which Matthew Arnold found at its best in Burns should belong perhaps to the poetry on babyhood. No verse offers more tragic simplicity, more wonder, or more possibilities of enigma. A sacked Rome or a ravished Verdun awakens our feelings of melancholy grandeur, but the sight of deserted toys awaiting the touch of a little hand, or of a Pompeian doll, preserved immaculate in a tomb, mute reminder of a little girl who loved it, now gone to dust these thousand years, becomes infinite pathos. It is as if God's hand had touched us silently, yet relentlessly, with His own tragic potency. He giveth and He taketh away. There is balm neither in Gilead, nor in this rushing, amazingly blind world. The thought of a kindly Reaper who whispers, "My Lord has need of these flowerets gay", is but feeble comfort for the sorrowing heart. Grief will not yield to such futility; instead it cries out against the eternal Why—

... Yet, you had fancied God could never
Have bidden a child turn from the spring and the sunlight,
And shut him in that lonely shell, to drop forever
Into the emptiness and silence, into the night . . .

Among the ashen tombs on Old Burial Hill at Plymouth are a number of stones erected to babies and small children, victims of a land where for them all things went awry. There they stand in quietness beside a most beautifully harsh sea. The epitaphs on some of them leave no wonder at the sudden fruition later of the Golden Age. On them is found the transcendental grief of all love and loss. One says—

He listened for a while to hear
Our mortal griefs; then tuned his ear
To angel harps and songs, and cried
To join their notes celestial, sighed and died.

Another over the grave of a baby of twenty-five days asks the ages-old question, a question in this case only too well answered by the historian—"What did the little hasty sojourner find so forbid-

ding and disgusting in our Upper World to occasion its precipitant exit?" This mournful farewell was engraved with clumsy fingers over a third, placed above several small children—

Sleep on, my babes, and take your rest,
'Twas God who called you when He thought it best.

If we were searching for the different tones of baby poetry, we would not find it necessary to go much further than this. From the time when Chaucer's Custance sang her lullaby by the seashore to her little baby down to Aline Kilmer, we have had the poets saddened and puzzled, or accepting the same meagre hope of all being well, as expressed in these epitaphs. The little "hasty sojourner" has flitted in and out among the most profound and mature poetry, and few poets have touched him with thoughts other than those of grief or wonder. If he is called upon to leave us, he goes, like Peter Grimm's William, as through the moonlight, accompanied by elfin or celestial music.

There is not, however, so much poetry on the deaths of babies as one would expect. Most of it that still survives one may find in a reading of the scrapbooks made in the 'eighties or 'nineties, or a perusal of the newspaper query box verse; at least enough to leave one appalled at the great sorrow of personal loss. The poems are so sincere, and so uninspired. Little baby stockings that can no longer be used, lonely Christmases that once were brightened by baby sweetness, harsh words spoken and remembered only too well when there was no chance of forgiveness, baby faces pressed against window panes, awaiting the homecoming of father or mother, tiny pattering feet, now silent, the sound of gurgling voices that now are still, all are there. Even the stern Daniel Webster wrote some verses on the death of his child, worthy enough to be kept alive for us by the American anthologists. It was left for Aline Kilmer however to give us the most poignant one, a poem which tells the story of a young mother who, forgetting for the moment that her baby is dead, goes into a shop to buy a soap doll, thinking of the joy the baby will have when it is placed in the bath water; then the sudden remembering. The most profound one perhaps came from Charles Lamb, a bitter contemplation over the body of a baby who had died soon

after birth, a "nameless piece of babyhood" who had passed away "with scarce the sense of dying."

The great poet of skill and aesthetic feeling cannot, it seems, at least often, create poetry on his own grief over the loss of his baby. The reader who expects to find in such the consummate poetic expression of the author will be disappointed. Lowell, for instance, in the three poems on the little ones now buried so close together in "sweet Auburn", just across the street from Elmwood, did not go, in restraint or profound beauty, much beyond the many anonymous newspaper poems on the same subject. Mrs. Kilmer's poems on her baby are perhaps the one exception to this; the baby who had brought her dead leaves instead of the fresh, live ones of the other children, the baby too "exquisitely sweet to stay." The easy answer to the why of this would be that the poet could not master so deep a grief, could never reach the quietness of emotion recollected in tranquillity, and so became, not a poet, but a parent lost in sorrow, groping blindly for expression. Yet we have many perfect poems, such as "Little Boy Blue" and "Threnody", written by fathers of young children who had recently died.

There are several paradoxes concerning some of the poets inspired by babies. William Blake, that strange mystic whom even Wordsworth thought mad, when writing of babies, often possessed the realistic crispness and lack of sentimentality so admired by the moderns. Coming as they did at a time when babies had entered English poetry almost entirely in lullabies, his poems give a definite shock. One couldn't expect such so long before a modernity that shows us the naturalistic sonnet or imagist verse on a bathtub or a dead horse. Poems like "Infant Sorrow" or "Infant Joy" might have been written yesterday. There is something almost primitive in all of them, something of the quality now diagnosed by the behavioristic psychologist with desperate logic. One could call "Infant Sorrow", I suppose, a "psychological" poem on babyhood, perhaps the first and one of the very few in English poetry.

Swinburne, in many ways the best poet on babyhood, certainly the most ecstatic and rapturous, was never married. It is difficult to think of him, *enfant terrible* even of young intellectualism, the elfin sophisticant of late Victorianism, enraptured by the

sight of pink baby feet. One could as easily imagine Mencken eulogizing the simple-hearted Fundamentalist fighting to preserve the God of his boyhood. Yet Swinburne not only wrote often of babies, but quoted the New Testament in describing them.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven
And blood have defied each creed;
If of such be the kingdom of heaven,
It must be heaven indeed.

Strangely, too, when he comes to the writing on children, he quickly and thoroughly doffs his pagan despair and dons the sweetened lyricism of a Longfellow.

If childhood were not in the world,
But only men and women grown;
No baby-locks in tendrils curled,
No baby-blossoms blown;

.
This were a drearier star than ever
Yet looked upon the sun.

He summons his most extravagant language for his raptures over a baby's appealing beauty—a baby's feet are "like sea-shells pink", a baby's hands like "rose-buds furl'd", a baby's eyes "bless all things bright enough" to win attention.

Robert Greene, who gave us the loveliest lullaby in English poetry, was a roisterer who deserted his wife. Charles Lamb, a bachelor like Swinburne, whose dream children seem more real to us than many of actual life, although a sweet-souled romanticist in his essays, in his poetry could hurl most cruel invectives against a Nature that would send helpless infants into a world of sadness, then capriciously snatch them away. Perry H. Lowrey (author of the Mississippi state song), so the story goes, once won a bet by writing and publishing immediately a poem on a subject selected by a group of men as being impossible for men poets—that of the thoughts of a pregnant woman just before childbirth.

Mothers have seldom written successfully of babies. (Mrs. Kilmer is here again an exception.) It was left for the spinsters, poor Mary Lamb, Dorothy Wordsworth, Lucy Larcom, Christina Rossetti, and Jane Taylor, to fill the anthologies with their wistful verses on babyhood.

Longfellow, too, when considered as a baby poet, presents something of a paradox. We would like to think of him as a baby specialist. We would like to summon him back to his chestnut chair and there surround him with the children of his imagination, as Barrie did for Meredith and his beautiful women. We would place him there in his old home, "the roof that shelter'd Washington's retreat", and watch him while the children, grave Alice and laughing Allegra and all the others, gathered about him; the old home where, said his English contemporary, John Nichol,—

—grim faced captains of colonial days
Salute the builders of old German rhyme;
And choral troops of children hymn the praise
Of their own master minstrel of all time.

It would make a most touching picture. He was just the poet for such. But Longfellow is not even the children's poet, as folklore fiction and John Nichol would have us believe. Undoubtedly he loved them, but we have no evidence that he ever understood children; certainly not as did Stevenson, Milne, Mrs. Kilmer, Elizabeth Madox Roberts or the newly-arrived Dorothy Aldis. In a long lifetime given largely to the writing of poetry, he wrote only nine poems on children, poems which, even to the most diligent searcher, reveal but little of child psychology or child beauty, in spite of their tenderness. How literary artificial he seems when we place "To a Child" or "The Children's Hour" beside, let us say, "Disobedience", "Come Out With Me", or "Song Against Children." There is no appeal whatever in lines such as—

O child! O new-born denizen
Of life's great city! on thy head
The glory of the morn is shed
Like a celestial benison!

They sound hollow and inane.

Many poets writing of babies regard them with adult cynicism. They seldom, Browning-like, welcome them to the joy of the strife. Nearly all of the early lullabies use such as a motif. The refrain of Greene's poem, "Sephestia's Song to her Child", the croon to the "little wanton" whose piercing cry has wailed forth over three centuries (to the joy, I hope, of all readers of the "outline"

anthologies, readers who must have been sickened by the profusion of the graceful affectations of euphemism), is such.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee;
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

Scott closes his cradle song, "Lullaby of an Infant Chief", not with thoughts of the glory to come to him, but with lines suggestive of adult weariness—

O. hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come,
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

The modern poet, Christopher Morley, in his poem called "To a Very Young Gentleman", has humanized the irony for us—

My child, what painful vistas are before you!
What years of youthful ills and pangs and bumps—
Indignities from aunts who 'just adore' you,
And chicken-pox and measles, croup and mumps!
I don't wish to dismay you,—it's not fair to,
Promoted now from bassinet to crib,—
But O my babe, what trouble flesh is heir to,
Since God first made so free with Adam's rib!

From the time of Chaucer at least we have had lullabies in English poetry. In fact, one can almost feel that baby songs would have become a real possession of Anglo-Saxon poetry, had not euphemism and classicism stifled so many tendencies toward sentiment. Many of the modern ones are but echoes, with much of the fragrance lost, of those earlier ones, so full of tenderness and melody. The sixteenth century, while not rich in them, left us some excellent ones. In most of them the mother, while singing her lullaby, reveals her own tragedy, reveals it with the swift indirectness of the folk ballad. In fact, the lullaby is often but the mechanism for portraying the grief over disappointed love of the mother. The tragedy, of course, is made more pathetic by the telling of it to the sleeping or fretful baby.

Apparently the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not much interested in babies, since we had to wait for the romanticists of the nineteenth century to revive for us the early croon

song. Most of the poets of that century, excepting Keats, gave us verses on babies or very young children. Tennyson, by all popular votes at least, would be selected as the best. In spite of their almost fatal prettiness, his lullabies still retain their freshness and charm. In the best of them, "Sweet and Low", we have the almost typical English romantic setting—the mother singing to her baby of the father's return from the sea, singing that faultless song with its soft reiterative sounds—

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me:
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Again he gives us a delicate little song, a deceptive but priceless trifle, to be prized above many poems of profound thought—

Baby sleep a little longer,
 'Till the little limbs are stronger.
 If she sleeps a little longer,
 Baby too shall fly away.

Among the American poets, the most noted perhaps in this type of verse are Eugene Field and the negro, Paul Laurence Dunbar. James Whitcomb Riley, in spite of his deserved popularity as a child poet, cannot be considered seriously here. When writing of babies, he is often maudlin, striving too hard for easy tears. The lullabies of Field are intensely imaginative; they are, too, child-like and fit themselves easily to soft music. No American poet, writing of children, surpasses them in metrical skill. The immortal "Wynken, Blynken and Nod" deserves all the love which children and parents have lavished on it. The "Rock-a-By Lady" is a "catalogue of lovely things" held dear by children, and is clothed in rich, sleepy music—

The Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby Street
 Comes stealing; comes creeping;
 And poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
 And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet—
 She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet!
 When she findeth you sleeping!

He is just as delightful in his prankish moods, and perhaps more real—

I say, as one who never feared
 The wrath of a subscriber's bullet,
 I pity him who has a beard
 But has no little girl to pull it!

Paul Laurence Dunbar, while not so brilliant perhaps as a metrist, yet possesses a most winning quality not found often in other cradle song poets—a quality of pitying love which expresses itself at times in racial peevishness. His poems are more chant-like in form, natural to a negro writing emotionally. In one of them, "Lullaby", the old negro mammy sings to her white charge—

You been bad de livelong day,
 Po' little lamb.
 Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
 Po' little lamb.
 My, but you's a runnin' wil',
 Look jes lak some po' folks chile;
 Mammy gwine whup you atter while,
 Po' little lamb.

Maeterlinck's little Blue Children souls and Barrie's charming Never-Never Land bairns, awaiting birth into a mysterious land, are to be found embryonic in English poetry long before those two immortals quickened them into a poetic eternity. The poets have used their prettiest language to tell us of that Never-Never Land, repeating each other with startling accuracy. The babies came, they said, "from the lotus lands of far away", or "from the gates of heaven". Mrs. Conkling recently told us that her child prodigy arrived "from the coasts of morning pale." The lesser poet, George MacDonald, asked and answered in unimagina-tive couplets several decades before Barrie or Maeterlinck—

Where did you come from, baby dear?
 Out of the everywhere into the here.

But Wordsworth had written the final word, and, after him, all the behavioristic psychologists together could not convince the parents of a few days of the animalism of their babies. Despite all obvious characteristics, those little lives are "trailing clouds of glory", fresh from God.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.

There is one subject of babyhood almost entirely neglected by the poet—that of the inevitable approach of death and the grief of the parent who, helpless, must watch the tragedy. It is a theme almost approaching bad taste, unbearable for the sensitive reader. Charles Tennyson Turner, the poet laureate's older brother who changed his surname in adulthood, a poet whom it seems we have forgotten now (some day perhaps we shall re-discover him with as much joyful amazement as that which accompanied our recent finding of Emily Dickinson), used it beautifully and with complete restraint in "Her First-Born." But to make the poem more poignant, his young mother was the only one who did not realize the tragedy: the sorrow lay with the friends and relatives who must stand by and watch her delight, so soon to be shattered.

One can generalize and say that nearly all men poets, unconsciously perhaps, assume different personalities while writing of babies. The roisterer forgets his bravado and becomes tender; the romanticist is embittered by the tragedy of babyhood; the pagan cynic forgets his despair and rhapsodizes over the pinkness of a baby's body. Perhaps they become more human and give themselves freely to the abandonment of sentimentality. Even with a full knowledge of the Prioress's Tale, it is difficult to think of Chaucer as the author of the lullaby in "The Tale of the Man of Lawe." If one turns from it to the tales of the Wife of Bath, the Reve or the Miller, the problem becomes more perplexing. Those lines of incomparable beauty, of almost Biblical simplicity, surely the sweetest to be found in mediaeval poetry, come entirely as a surprise even to the Chaucerian student who realizes the varied poetic interests of the author—

Her litel child lay weping in hir arm,
 And kneling, pitously to him she seyde,

'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm!
 With that hir kerchief of hir heed she breyde,
 And over hir litel yēn she it leyde;
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful waste,
 And in-to heven hir yēn up she caste.

Nor is it at all the Shelley we know whom we find in his one poem on a baby, the poem called "To Ianthe", dedicated to his first child, by Harriet, in a few years to be taken from him, as later were the children of Oscar Wilde, by the popular prejudice of England; the baby so passionately loved by the father, carried for hours at a time, so Peacock tells us, in his arms, while he sang to it a monotonous melody of his own making, something about "Yahmani, Yahmani, Yahmani"; the baby loved the more passionately because the mother refused to suckle it. He called it his "fair and fragile blossom", "so eloquently weak",

Dearest when most thy tender traits express
 The image of thy mother's loveliness.

Yet only a few years later this "image of loveliness" was found, a suicide, in the Serpentine River, and Shelley, living in Italy with Mary Godwin, found himself again and again the victim of an unmerciful disaster, following fast and faster, until that day in August when Trelawny and a few other friends deposited his ashes in the English burying ground at Rome.

Neither is it the erotic D. H. Lawrence of the mystical and mysterious "Sons and Lovers" whom we see in his poem, "A Baby Asleep After Rain." The poem is cold, but gives nevertheless a lovely portrait. The father is carrying the sleeping child. "with soft white legs hanging heavily" over his arm. She had always seemed so light before; now "wet with tears and numb with pain,"—

As a drenched drowned bee
 Hangs numb and heavy from a bending flower,
 So clings to me
 My baby, her brown hair brushed with wet tears
 And laid against her cheek.

We too, the readers, come to the poetry on babies with a different attitude from that of our general experience. It would be almost impossible to convince even a most intelligent parent

that Riley's "When Our Baby Died" is bathos, or that Blake's lyrics are almost faultless, while "The Baggage Coach Ahead" is "sob stuff." Once I spent a Christmas in the home of a young intellectual, an instructor in English whose constant cry was for "pure poetry". He had added his bit gustfully to the demolition of Longfellow and Tennyson and had aimed at shocking his classes into silence by announcing that Walt Whitman was the only American poet before 1910. Yet I found him searching earnestly that week-end for some Christmas poem or song that would satisfy the family in expressing their happiness over the baby's first Christmas. When he discovered "Hang Up the Baby's Stocking," his joy was almost as great as it would have been had he found an unpublished poem by his beloved Keats. It was just the poem needed. So for days the household rang with the words—

Hang up the baby's stocking;
Be sure you don't forget—
The dear little dimpled darling!
Has ne'er seen Christmas yet.

Not so bad, I thought, for an ardent admirer of George Moore. It seemed obvious proof, too, that most of us, when away from literary fads and veneers, find the homely poetry on the fundamental elements of life, when it touches our own emotional life, even when syrupy with sentimentality, appealing. It perhaps explains too why the college-trained mother, with her sleepy baby nestling close, will instinctively fall back on the old folklore lullabies, full of memories of other mothers dead these many years, and of children, matured and gone to dust in countless burial-grounds, and sing to her child such delightful nonsense as—

Rock-a-Bye, baby, thy cradle is green;
Father's a nobleman, mother's a queen;
And Betty's a lady, and wears a gold ring;
And Johnny's a drummer, and drums for the King.

It would be interesting but futile to forecast the baby poetry that is to come. Now that child psychology is coming to the front as a universal subject, that women poets are filling our magazines with verse, and the nursery school is judged by the educators to be but an intermediate stage of study, a different

interpretation must come. Perhaps we shall have more poetry on babies like that of William Blake, fuller psychology and less sentiment. The baby clinic will perhaps reveal a new field for the thoughtful realist, and will be lifted from an academic study to the realm of poetry.

But let us hope that we have not had the last "Hang Up the Baby's Stocking" or "The Baggage Coach Ahead."

BERT ROLLER..

George Peabody College for Teachers.
Nashville, Tennessee.

FOREVER ENGLAND

(SCYROS—1928)

Bare, russet flanks, projecting rocks austere—
Home for wild goats—no lovely verdure seen—
And this a part of England's emerald green—
There is no hint of rain-washed England near.
Inhospitable island, bleak and drear,
Parched by sun's blazing southern arrows keen—
Beating on dazzling waters' jewelled sheen—
No silver mists—there is no England here—
And yet "forever England" so he said,
Who slumbers deep beside these splashing seas,
That gallant boyish heart that fought and bled
For freedom—and his radiant melodies
Have found an English heaven overhead
And English moon—silvering the olive trees.

CHARLOTTE FARRINGTON BABCOCK.

THE GREEKS AS HUMANISTS.

πάντων Χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος. Man is the measure of all things. This is an ancient and at the same time a comprehensive statement of what we mean by humanism. Our understanding of this statement, however, will vary with our understanding of *ἄνθρωπος*, man. Truly, what is man?

The Sophists, whose epigram I have borrowed, although they made man the center of their scheme of things, thought very ill of man. Man is only a little higher than the animals; scratch the veneer of his civilization and you find the brute. Give him the opportunity and he would break every convention that he himself has made; he is restrained by one thing alone, the fear of society. Life is war and only the fit survive. In this warfare, man knows only one law: the calculation of his own expediency. Everything else is sham and delusion. Truth? There is no truth except what is true for me. Law? There is no law except what suits my own selfish ends. Morally, the sophist ends in chaos and philosophically, in utter subjectivity, utter relativity,—which is likewise chaos.

The Sophists were an interesting, perhaps a necessary, chapter in the development of Greek thought. There have been sophists ever since; there are sophists today. The sophistic point of view recurs from time to time in the history of thought, now in this guise, now in that. At best, it is no more than a crude form of naturalism which measures the nature of man entirely in terms of that from which man is steadily and surely emerging and not at all in terms of that toward which he is as steadily and surely advancing. Had this been the sole contribution of Greek thought on the subject of man and his moral and spiritual make-up, of life and man's relation to life, of reality and man's strivings in that direction, the term Humanism, as we understand it today, would have had quite different implications and connotations.

Historically, humanism is that movement in European thought of the twelfth century which broke through the mediæval

traditions of scholastic theology and philosophy and devoted itself to the rediscovery and the direct study of the Classics. It was a revolt against intellectual and especially theological authority and the parent of all modern developments. There is no more thrilling period in human history than the Renaissance. With what agonies, with what martyrdoms, with what heroism, did the human spirit rise from its century-old slumbers, shake off its stupefying lethargy and turn its unaccustomed eyes away from the darkness and the shadows of the cave to the fullness of the noonday light!

A very brief outline will suffice to put us in sympathy with those first humanists. The Greeks from the days of Thales and the dawn of philosophy had run through the diapason. It has truly been said that they left unexplored very few of the regions accessible to the human mind. We have first those daring but brilliant cosmological speculations of the pre-Socratics who, in their splendid desire to understand the world in which they lived, anticipated many a departure of modern science. Then we have the life and the teachings of Socrates himself, the father of philosophy and the first great humanist. We pass on through Platonism, Aristotelianism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Cynicism, Skepticism. Truly tireless was the yearning of the Greek spirit to put itself in harmony with its environment. If philosophy alone could bring peace to the human spirit, then Greek philosophy should have done so.

It did not do so; and the mind of man, in utter weariness it seems, turned toward revealed authority as a last refuge. From the dawn of the Christian era to the Renaissance, we have an age of authority, an age of faith. Greek philosophy is lost and forgotten. For fifteen-hundred years the human intellect is either dormant or busied entirely with the elaboration and the fortification of dogmatic theology and infallible intellectual systems. The various stages are clearly discernible. The first is the age of the Christian Fathers, culminating in the authoritative writings of Augustine, who died in 430. The second we normally refer to as the Dark Ages; it follows upon the German invasions as a result of which the world was plunged for a time into Stygian

darkness and lasts down to the year 1100 or thereabouts. Thereafter came the period of Scholasticism. That majestic intellectual structure enthroned the ghastly mummy of "Ille Philosophus" and repudiated and anathematized everything that was not entirely consonant with the teachings of Aristotle as they were understood.

With the various heritages which are ours as a result of this mediæval influence, I am not primarily concerned. Particularly, I am concerned with the aspect of this age against which humanism came into being as a protest. It was essentially an age of faith, of believing, of reliance on authority. No stimulus was given to thinking as such; on the contrary, it was discouraged except in so far as it elaborated the accepted order of things. Truth was sought not by way of the intelligence, not by way of question or doubt, but by way of revelation and the systematization of unquestioned dogma.

Again, I am not concerned with the facts that lead to the Renaissance, further than that an immense impulse was given to the movement by the rediscovery of Greek literature. With this discovery went a renewed interest in things Greek, in the Greek view of life, in the Greek spirit. Here, strange as it must have seemed to an awakening world, was a period in man's development in which apparently authority was little known, in which the spirit ranged at will and the intellect had free play, no prohibitory signs along the way. Extraordinary contrast with that world in which man found himself! One must drink deep at this old spring and look with the eyes of long ago on life and on the world. Belief, revelation, dogma, authority! Nay, doubt, human reason, knowledge, freedom,—Humanism! That the world found this inspiration in the rediscovery of classical literature is, of course, a matter of history. It is my purpose to consider the Greek outlook on life, to see wherein lay its power to afford such an inspiration, and to determine, with such understanding as I have, "Which way, Greek Humanism?"

Attention has been called to the comparative absence of authority in the Greek scheme of things. This fact is singularly apparent to one who compares the records we have of the

Greeks with the Old Testament record of the Hebrews. There are, to be sure, certain outstanding "commandments" as it were in Greek life, certain idols we may call them, but they come in every instance from the hard-won experience of generations, not from any special piece of divine revelation. Consider the time-honored phrase, *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, that extraordinary, all-pervading virtue of *σωφροσύνη*. No Moses of old gave this law of life to the Greeks; it was the result of their national experience. It became a characteristic trait of Greek life, the supreme canon of their art, the criterion of their æsthetic judgments and also, by an unusual identification, the criterion of their ethical judgments. It passed by way of their maxims into philosophy and became, in Aristotle, a philosophic principle. But never by any chance was divine sanction claimed for it. The privilege of making one's own mistakes,—one of the most vital factors in the development of the individual or the race,—the Greeks seem to have claimed for themselves. There were no sign posts along the way, no special privileges in the way of divine revelation; only an irresistible urge to know the reason why, a deep-rooted conviction that man is equipped to win through, an unquenchable desire to leave footprints on the sands of time. Herein we have one outstanding trait of Greek life that is essentially humanistic in its nature.

Again, the Greeks seem to have been alive to the reality, to the importance of this life. They were not, as has been said of Christians of certain ages, so concerned with another life that they could not live fully, freely, this life. On the contrary, *this* was the life, to the Greeks. Death was a little understood event which must come to mortals, but following the characteristic advice of Pericles in the Funeral Speech, they sought in life consolation for the fact of death. There never was a people who got so much done in so short a time. What a feverish intensity there must have been in that little corner of the Mediterranean world! "A white hot center of spiritual force in a world of effortless barbarism", is the description that Gilbert Murray gives us. In a world that lived by pagan standards, walled in on all sides by an inertia that might well have daunted

their sturdy souls, this people, with only their humanism,—their belief in life and in man's power to live a full and a good life,—emerged somehow from their own condition of barbarism, gazed for a passing moment on life, saw it steadily and saw it whole, then passed on. Take their sculpture for example: in the seventh century, their merchants and rovers of the sea saw the crude efforts of the Egyptians to represent their gods in stone; in the fifth century, Pheidias gave us his Olympian Zeus, which, now but a memory, lives as the supreme effort of the sculptor's art. Take their drama: in the last days of the sixth century, votaries of the God Dionysus were still engaged with their extempore celebrations; before the middle of the fifth century, Aeschylus presented at Athens his "Oresteia", "the noblest work of man" as Swinburne speaks of it. Or take their philosophy: in the sixth century Thales and others began those first speculations in regard to the nature of things; not two hundred years later, Plato spoke for all time.

Naturally there are mistakes, there are crude beginnings, there are one-sided philosophies of life. In their efforts to live a full life the Greeks were guilty of every extreme. In their efforts to squeeze out of life the best that it had, they sank to the depths, they rose to the heights. But somehow or other, as a people, the Greeks seemed to have steered clear. They avoided the Scylla of the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and the Epicureans; they veered away from the Charybdis of *ἀταξία* or apathy of the Stoics; they stuffed their ears with wax and heard not the cacophonous barkings of the Cynics and the Sceptics. They came through with a sense of values that might well be of our envy. In matters that touched their bodies, they were simple in their wants, continent, even frugal; in matters that touched their spirit, they were seemingly insatiable. Herein lies another phase of that general view that broke upon those Renaissance humanists as they wonderingly explored the length and the breadth of Greek life.

One of those early pre-Socratics, Anaxagoras, gained for himself the name of *Nous*, Reason. This name perfectly characterizes another very striking aspect of the Greek spirit: the

appeal to that guide, that inner monitor, that proud possession which exalted man above the animals and made him like the Gods. These pioneers of Greek Philosophy,—wrong though their methods may have been, insubstantial though their guesses may have proved to be,—acted on the fundamental hypothesis that there is truth, that it possesses objective validity, and that it is within the power of the human mind to ascertain truth. There was a heroism about these "oldtimers", a conviction, a faith, a vision that shines through the ages. Names they are now but how often some modern theory finds its prototype in those earliest speculations of Greek philosophers as to the nature of things.

Rational

It was Socrates who pointed out their fallacy. They sought a royal road to truth: one glorified hypothesis from which deductively and painlessly man could explain all things. If we give Socrates credit for nothing else, we must credit him with this one contribution which is the rock on which all later philosophy rests: that, whereas the assumption is true that there is a principle which unifies all knowledge, this principle, logically prior though it may be to all knowledge, will come only later, after ages of painstaking observation, of self-scrutiny, of discouragement, of meager progress, to crown man's efforts to know and to understand. First things first, is one inevitable lesson from the Socratic life; he was the father of the inductive approach as compared with the deductive approach to reality.

Inductive method

And the first step is honest, intelligent agnosticism. As he stood on the street corners in Athens and engaged in his dialectical encounters with this or that individual, and as he came inevitably to his favorite conclusion, "I do not know", he was a breaker of idols, a crusader against the false pretense of knowledge, and he was teaching the first lesson of humanism. But to dismiss Socrates with that is to fail to do him full justice. Underlying his scepticism, shining through it for those who would see, was that all-powerful motive force of the Hellenic spirit: that there is truth and that it is within the power of the human mind to know the truth. The necessary preliminary is honest doubt; the only certain ground on which

X

to rear the structure of knowledge is to be gained—it may be at the cost of heart-breaks and of tears, of shattered pride, of fallen idols—by saying honestly, humbly, and without reserve: I do not know. Socrates's spirit so understood was Bacon's spirit in a later age. As Bacon was the guiding genius of our modern age, so Socrates was of his own bright age. In Bacon, in Descartes, in all of those Renaissance humanists, we see resurgent the Socratic spirit: glorified scepticism which is born of the conviction that truth is truth and that man has it in his power to know, however dimly, the truth; that, as man is rational, so is life and the universe reasonable; that life is short and the road is long and hard, but we can win through, we are winning through to a knowledge of the truth which is the same for my mind and for other minds.

Aristotle, not Socrates, has seemed to many, and will seem, the supreme Greek humanist. He is the indefatigable seeker after truth, the delver into every branch of human knowledge, the calm, cold analyst, the great logician, the champion of rationalism as opposed to Platonic mysticism. In the "Ethics" we have an analysis of accepted Greek moral standards, in the "Poetics" a critique of Greek Art, in the "Politics" a treatise on Greek institutions, in the "Physics" a commentary on man's environment, in the "Metaphysics" his speculations on First Philosophy, in the "Logic" an analysis, of the formal laws of thought. Throughout there is sharp and clear analysis, vigorous logic, an absence of appeal to authority, a praiseworthy regard for phenomena, a cautious generalization—all of which qualities stamp Aristotle as essentially humanistic in his approach.

The "Ethics" above all is a humanistic document. The supreme end of human existence is *ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς*, self-realization. Life is presented as something to be lived to the fullest. We come into the world a congeries of *δυνάμεις*, potentialities or talents; life is a process of realization or actualization of these potentialities. There is no suggestion of authority, save only that of human reason. Man is the measure of all things, but what is the measure of man? Reason is the measure of man. Reason is the arbiter, the judge, the final court of appeal.

No greater injustice was ever done a truly great man than that which Scholasticism did Aristotle. Scholasticism canonized Aristotelianism or the teachings of Aristotle. It crucified the very spirit of Aristotle and it is, by an extraordinary paradox, the revived Greek spirit of the Renaissance that is called upon to dethrone Aristotle. By a process essentially not Greek, the substance of the thought of one Greek found itself erected into a dogmatic system against which it was finally necessary to invoke the Greek spirit itself.

The vitality of Aristotle is such, however, that it will take more than Scholasticism to extinguish it. It has been said that the human mind has been busy ever since the Renaissance trying to unlearn all that Aristotle taught. Even so, there stands Aristotle,—the inevitable challenge to all humanists. *Ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς* is the end of human existence; what statement could be more profoundly true or make of life a more provocative or intriguing affair? And if anyone, in his day and time, achieved the end, Aristotle did. The very limits of human knowledge he sought to explore, calling on the mind to interpret by its own laws and lights the facts of life as they presented themselves to its scrutiny.

There are dangers in Aristotle, not the least of which is the inevitable drift toward rationalism. One might be led, as Aristotelians often are led, to the conclusion that humanism and rationalism are interchangeable terms. This position is, as I believe, essentially false and falls short of the truest and the highest conception of humanism. The very use of the term humanism, its persistence alongside of the term rationalism, would indicate that there are other phenomena than those of reason which one must include in a thorough-going humanism. One is not just certain of one's ground here: there is on the one hand the extreme of rationalism and on the other that of mysticism. It were equally wrong to discount entirely the mystical experience and to give it free rein. The position of humanism must be that of mediator between rationalism and mysticism. The characteristic conditions and types of mystical experience must be studied and the accidental distinguished as far as possible

from the permanent. Difficult task, you will say. Yes, perhaps an impossible task in so far as one is called upon to satisfy extremists of either type. Yet it must be remembered that humanism without mysticism has usually ended in pessimism and that mysticism uncriticized always becomes fanatical.

This age-old conflict suggests another that is the same under different names: the conflict between humanism and science. The scientist is essentially the rationalist. In his laboratory or in the field, he comes on truths that, taken out of their proper relatedness, are disconcerting. Science has trodden the paths of materialism and mechanism and is even now not free from that taint. From the humanistic point of view, such an attitude toward man and his relation to his environment is untenable. Man, far from being the product of forces, the plaything of forces over which he has no control, is superior to those forces, grasping them, harnessing them, serving with them his own ends. The Greeks produced their Democritus with his atomistic philosophy. From the very beginning, they toyed with the idea of *ἀνάγκη*, necessity. From the frequent recurrence of the term in their literature, one might almost be inclined to call them a fatalistic people. Yet never was there a less fatalistic people on the face of the earth. Their whole history of feverish creativeness, of activity, of achievement would give the lie to such a charge; in it we can see, in letters small but letters of fire, the epic of man's triumphant progress. Forces? Yes. Laws? Yes. Things not to be bowed down to or cringed before, but to be utilized and understood. The Greeks knew little of the findings of modern Science. The magnificent vistas down which we gaze were closed to the Greeks. Socrates, it is well known, discouraged the study of the physical sciences. His reasons are not always well understood, it seems to me. So insistently did he call on men to put first things first, so urgently did he plead with men that their first duty was self-knowledge, that he seems to have discredited scientific knowledge. As I read again and again his exhortations to the Athenians to pay more regard to themselves and less regard to the things of themselves, the thought forces itself upon me that

Socrates's advice would not be amiss in our modern scientific age. But even so, in the face of all the magnificent achievements of our sciences, neither the Greeks nor Socrates himself would have been dismayed. Their humanism would not have been destroyed. Man is the measure of all things. How much more glorious man, that he is the measure of so mighty a universe whose bounds are infinity, whose laws are eternal. Under modern conditions, with the touch of a Sophocles, how much more extravagant, how much more fulsome, might have been the terms of that fine apostrophe to man which we find in the opening chorus of the "Antigone". I cannot conceive of the Greeks as materialists; I cannot conceive of them as mechanists; I cannot conceive of them as holding seriously to any philosophy which lowers man from his proud position as the μέτρον, the measure of his universe. I realize, of course, that there is a higher and a truer spirit of science than that to which I have referred—that spirit, characteristic of so many splendid men of science, which sees in each move forward of science but a step in man's progress toward a fuller comprehension of himself and the world in which he lives and moves. With that spirit of science, humanism has no conflict; on the contrary it is the most valuable ally of humanism.

It is not my purpose to expand to such a degree the idea of humanism that it shall mean so much that it means nothing. Thus far I have based my various contentions in its regard on the outstanding currents of Greek thought and life as I understand them, coming to what would seem the complete statement of humanism as expressed in Aristotle's ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς, or self-realization. I have guarded against a complete rationalism, feeling that that position is not comprehensive enough. I have suggested terms with the mystic. I have held out the hand of friendship to the spirit of science which seems to me not only easily reconciled with but indispensable to humanism. I come now to the last phase of my argument, the relation of humanism to theism.

Aristotle approached the subject of Deity entirely through rationalistic channels. The existence of God is an hypothesis

to which we are logically led in order that we may not be compelled to explain reason by that which is not reason. His God is fearfully and wonderfully made: eternal, immaterial, absolute spirit, whose very perfection excludes the contemplation of imperfection; who is, therefore, shut up within the impregnability of his own perfection, transcendental, remote, unapproachable, impersonal, having no relation to human affairs.

Such conclusions are quite possible for humanists. I have no doubt that many who call themselves humanists are content with this rather barren type of theism—or should I call it deism? They are forced by their own logic, as was Aristotle, to admit that God is a necessary hypothesis but further than that they are not willing to go. Such individuals, falling back on their own resources, find life worth living in and for itself, for the very appeal and challenge it presents, they know not why. There is a splendid courage in them, an irrefragable inner faith in humanity in general and in their own humanity, that keeps them out of pessimistic gloom. They cultivate their own gardens, leaving unsolved the insoluble. They exhibit, it seems to me, a rare combination of intellectual arrogance and intellectual timidity which is most paradoxical.

Can humanism avoid the sterility of these conclusions? It can and must if it is to furnish us with a worthy philosophy of life. The way is not far to seek. Aristotle's own *ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς*, points us the road, though Aristotle himself failed to lead us along it. Man is more than a thinking being. He is capable of beliefs and emotions which cannot be discredited and the noblest and highest of which humanism must take into account. It is Plato who affords to me the solution—Plato in whom Greek thought reached its highest point, Plato who achieves that delicate and truly Hellenic balance between rationalism and mysticism which I claim is true humanism.

When all is said for and against the Greeks, when the transitory in their life is sifted from the permanent, the dross from the pure gold, what have they given us? Three insistent questions they asked themselves; to three problems they sought an answer. What is the good life? Their answer is their ethics. What is

beauty? Their answer is their art. What is truth? Their answer is their philosophy. In the light of these residues, Platonism becomes to me a most extraordinary synthesis of Greek life. Here is a people with an inner conviction of the purposefulness of life—guilty of every extreme to be sure, making numerous mistakes, stumbling, groping, but withal winning through, laying the great stress on the ultimate facts of human experience, on goodness, on beauty, on truth. Plato saw what the average Greek did not see, perhaps could not have seen—a thing which, seen, might have saved Hellenism from the spiritual and intellectual bankruptcy in which it ended. Looking through the confusion of beautiful things, of good things, of true things, he saw beauty, truth, and goodness, not as empirical laws of human life but as eternal principles which are of the nature of God.

God to Plato is the all-inclusive unity. He is the logical glue which holds together multiplicity and makes it intelligible. With the transcendence of the Aristotelian God, He possesses at the same time the quality of immanence. The soul of man, painstakingly, arduously, stumblingly, rises out of the welter of phenomena to an understanding of the unity which underlies difference. It is of the very nature of the soul of man to yearn, to strive, to reach out—and these yearnings are not in vain. Breaking through to meet the soul, like the warming, lighting, life-giving rays of the sun, is God. The scientist, the philosopher, the humblest seeker after truth, the straight-thinker, know God; the artist, the poet, the servant of beauty, know God; the man of high moral purpose, the plain man seeking after goodness, the pure in heart, know God. He is the congruous origin: the source of beauty that is beautiful; the source of morality that is moral; the source of knowledge that is rational.

It is not a logical process, certainly, whereby Plato arrives at this conclusion. From ethic, from æsthetic, from science, we cannot deduce God. Nor from the idea of God can we deduce goodness, truth, beauty. Yet ethic, æsthetic, philosophy, represent the highest reaches of the human spirit: man exalted to acts of pure nobility, man catching and transmitting to his canvas "the light that never was on sea or land", man reach-

ing out to the very verge of human reason and human powers to know the truth. To give all this congruous origin, to lift it out of the realm of the accidental, is not logic, I grant; the steps are not mathematically demonstrable. Yet, it is given to men like Plato to rend the veil, to transcend the limit of human reason, to break down ordinary barriers and to look through and over on that which swims majestic within their ken—on all time and all existence. It is Plato and the other great mystics who go the limit that our humanity demands of us. Shall we not follow?

My conclusions are, I realize, essentially metaphysical. I have purposely not made them either religious or Christian. God as an ethical personality to whom men pray, whom men can love, who takes sides, who has preferences—I have not argued for. That Christian standard of conduct which exalts as the highest form of morality, forgetfulness of self—I have left untouched. The argument of this paper seeks purely to determine whither the ways of Greek humanism lead. I have traced them as I understand them through various byways: the humanism of the man in the streets, the naturalism of the Sophists, the bold hypotheses of the pre-Socratics, the glorified skepticism of Socrates, the rationalism of Aristotle, the theism of Plato. Which way then, Greek Humanism? Over and above all the confusion and error, the shortcomings and the failures, the Greeks have left as one imperishable gift of their humanism: their striving after truth, beauty, and goodness. That, in substance, in very fact, was Greek life. Aristotle, looking with cold, appraising eyes on the Greek life, rationalized these values. Plato, looking with eyes that saw beyond and through the ephemeral to the eternal, lifted these values out of the realm of time and space and estimated them at their true worth—the steps on which the human soul ascends to "God who is its home".

HENRY MARKLEY GASS.

University of the South.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

SOME ENTIRELY ARBITRARY REACTIONS

The waning day of Sherwood Anderson invites inquiry. Having said his piece (several times in fact) the moment for "the fade-out" has just about arrived. This superior craftsman whose happily wrought cadences have often pleased us, this poet whose lyric music has charmed our ear every once in a while, this analytical psychologist whose "wistful idealizations of the male menopause" and other phenomena, alternately shocked and moved us—and occasionally convinced us—is undoubtedly passing into the dusk which precedes an obliterating darkness. Each year of the passing is marked with a new novel, written with the avowed intention of recording the intense or aware moments of human life, of righting the wrong of machine-made civilization, of covering clean white sheets of paper with combinations of "singing words", of sounding the true note as an individual ring above the meaningless outcries of the rest of mankind—and so on, and so on.

Sherwood Anderson, skilled craftsman, passionately and wistfully pleading his incoherence, in getting across the message with which his mind and soul are supposed to be pregnant, and writing incomprehensible verse in the manner of a mystic, is distinctly annoying. One of the most potent reasons for his early literary demise will be his lack of message. One does not require, of course, that his message have social or moral import but it is essential that a novelist have something to say, and say it. Anderson's message, if any, was stated rather badly in his first works and is still being stated, much less badly, but with the repetition becoming more and more irksome. We must give him credit for telling us about the "wall". While not exactly a brand new idea, he has given this isolation of the individual an aura of pathos that wears well. He seems to be aware that something should be done about the deplorable condition which machine industry has created. He cogitates upon the immense possibilities of organized labor—and stops. Most

of us have reached that far. He has also discovered that most people of imagination find life a bit flat if they have become successful before middle age, and long for an escape from the monotony of money-getting and obligations of various sorts, into an El Dorado of freedom and self-expression. So far and very little further. No conclusions are reached, the characters never solve their problems, never even face them. There is a fundamental lack of structural thought. When his characters are faced with a problem involving their contact with society or industry or a spiritual conflict of some sort, they think and talk about it extensively and say strange things. And presently decamp with, say, their stenographer. Some critic suggests that this overworking of the escape-motif is indicative of Anderson's whole attitude toward life and art. Instead of making his characters react in a realistic way to real conditions, he lets them wander away into the dim passages of fancy which, if one lacks interpretive imagination, must be much easier. Unfortunately, however, his characters suffer immeasurably. We recall but few that were convincing or memorable. A limited number of minor characters have enduring qualities and are more objectively and spontaneously done. His main characters are shadows of himself viewed from different angles. Fleeting visual images of them in impossible attitudes are about all that remain to the reader. "I know a tall man with red hair. I have made him short and squat with dark hair falling over his eyes", exclaims Sherwood Anderson delightedly. Exactly! His childish pleasure in meaningless distortion, explains partly his apparent inertia of imagination in dealing with real people.

✓ These queer animals move in a world of lurid fancy and seldom feel firm ground beneath their feet—indeed would be unable to cope with actual physical surroundings.

This lack of interpretive imagination which renders him incapable of using the material at hand, has an unpleasant offspring in a certain self-consciousness which is usually not found in the person who has a lot to say. He admits in a weak moment that it would gratify him exceedingly if people who saw him passing, said, "There goes Sherwood Anderson. He can

be a bad man when he is aroused", or "There goes Sherwood Anderson. He can be a lustful male when he is aroused". Few can say that they have never experienced a similar feeling: but with Anderson the thing goes farther. While he disclaims any attempt to shock, wishing only, he says, to open up dark houses to the light, one feels strongly the bad-man swagger projecting itself onto the clean white sheets of paper which he covers. Despite a distaste for the Dreiserian form of prose, we do feel a sincerity which has little time for posturing of any sort. Dreiser at least thinks he has a message. We suspect that Sherwood Anderson doesn't even fool himself. We detect something a little panicky in his oft-repeated definitions of art, realism, mysticism, and so on. He protests too much.

At one time Sherwood Anderson said something very pertinent about the poison-plot and he has done a great deal to hasten its departure by his excellent short stories. Unfortunately he seems to forget his praiseworthy thesis when he takes up his pen to begin a novel. Never was a man more harassed for something for his characters to do. Driven to desperation, they indulge in unthinkable gestures, forced and foolish. Entirely lacking the beautiful spontaneity (except in notable spots) of his short stories, the grotesqueries seem to have lost any connection with the people whose identity they claim. Any long novel must have high spots but in a real work of art one seldom finds the bright places so surrounded by pages and pages of absolutely meaningless drivel. And the high spots themselves are so doubtful. This forcing of the action, with the interjection of a lot of pointless philosophizing helps to produce a deplorable lack of structure and form.

Anderson, his admirers contend, is "American", if nothing else, and so he is, if he would let himself be. But so concerned is he with his inner consciousness that only at the beginning of some of his novels and in a few minor characters does his vision of America break through the veil of "himself" that he has thrown over all his work. He stands bareheaded and awe-stricken before the enormous complexity of Sherwood Anderson, his mind and temperament. Books and books he has written

about himself, but still he finds his ego interesting and unfathomable—and so continues. This immense preoccupation extends itself into his style. One hears that he has lifted American idiom from the status of mere slang and made it "art". He has, it is true, given a certain Homeric quality to the idiom of the factory, the race course, and the pool room; but unfortunately, it is no longer American slang. Vigorous still and ungrammatical, but Andersonized beyond recognition. He starts out promisingly to be an "American" but loses entirely the flavor by the time it has sifted through the devious paths of his mind and got onto paper.

An English critic gives as a reason for the unproductiveness of Americans in art the wealth of material which the geographical and racial variety of America offers. The enormous amount of local color makes it too easy for a writer to do "acceptable" things which are neither art nor truly American. The varied and colorful backgrounds draw the attention of the reader away from the deficiencies of the characters. For this reason few real characters exist in the modern American novel, nor are they more than superficially American. The English critic also points out our unfortunate concern over the social well-being of our fellow countrymen. This proclivity for reform has so far produced little of real artistic value in America. We feel that Anderson handles his local color rather well, subordinating it sufficiently and yet giving enough of it to form an interesting and explanatory background. He does, however, fall into the last category suggested by our English critic. Anderson feels the need of reforming a good many things and sets about his task to the great loss of his work—as art. Not being very clear in stating the evils which he would correct, he is not even a very good reformer.

As with his attempted Americanism, he falls short of mysticism; of course missing the mark pretty far. His vision of God is entirely obscured by the interesting figure of Sherwood Anderson. Now and then a rift in the clouds sheds a mystic light on a piece of his work but for the most part he mistakes himself for God. One does not find this intense subjectivity

so objectionable in his verse. After reading pages of incomprehensible word combinations which lack notably the force and flow of the true mystic, one happens on three or four lines of lyric beauty usually concerned with the "wall", which are refreshingly lovely. This isolation is so keenly felt that its pathos is unforgettable and extremely convincing.

In his study of humanity as reflected in his own temperament ✓ he seldom ascends the heights but is forever plumbing the depths. This proclivity should not be deprecated unduly. It is necessary that the dark places be shown the light, but repetition becomes monotonous; these dark places once lighted lose interest and the switching on of the electric light in a room already bright with the noon-day sun is just a little foolish. Incidentally few could do it as successfully as Anderson does. He keeps us thinking he has done more than repeat the gesture, that he has shown us an impressive symbolism, which we would do well to think upon seriously—until the book is finished and we realize that he has done the same old thing—skilfully as usual.

The doctrine of dealing with aware moments in the lives of individuals, while apt to make his novels spotty, is an excellent one for the writing of short stories, and with these of course one can have no quarrel. *Winesburg, Ohio*, speaks for itself, and with it Anderson almost manages to bridge the gap which separates the craftsman from the artist. While the grotesque individuals of whom he writes are scarcely recognizable as our cousins from the corn belt, they are impressive as personifications of abnormalities, sexual and otherwise. Our "phallic Checkov" ✓ measures up handsomely to his Russian prototype and to Maupassant in craftsmanship, and more than equals them in vigor.

RACHEL SMITH.

University of Oregon.

BROWNING'S WHITMANISM

Recently, in a huge book of clippings in a collector's library, I found a cluster of articles published in 1912 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Robert Browning. Next in order was a cluster paying the same honor to Whitman in 1919. Glancing back and forth from one cluster to the other, I got a curious sense of subconscious iteration. I seemed to be viewing two literary nosegays made up to celebrate a twin birth. Seven years, in the long labor of Nature, is a brief interval (by the way, it is also a mystic interval) between the delivery of the elder and the younger twin.

In 2012 and 2019 Browning and Whitman may appear close kinsmen. They belonged to the same sphere, though in many respects at opposite poles of it; and the further that sphere diminishes in the perspective of time, the nearer together must come its poles. At present the two poets still wear an air of strong antithesis—and no wonder! The extreme emphasis that has been placed upon the uniqueness of each of them has obscured their underlying relationship, not only with each other but with the whole poetic movement in which they were important. Both mined a rich vein of metal running through the nineteenth century—the “natural” emotion of “the modern man”. Whitman struck into this vein with the clumsy felicity of an inexperienced miner who gets gold soon after arriving at camp and even while jovially contemning the regular methods of his fellows. Browning developed this vein under cover of a complex artistic apparatus elaborated by himself and seemingly designed for the mining of nothing natural. Two such craftsmen must for a while seem unique. But the metal they unearthed was common, and their evaluation of it was shaped by the same historical situation. Immediate feeling—feeling largely freed from the restraint and guidance of human tradition, and vivified by fresh intimacies with Nature—had previously been sung into the foreground of English poetry by Wordsworth and

his contemporaries. Browning and Whitman approached it, like second-comers to a newly discovered country, with diminished tunefulness but intensified belief. They cultivated this type of emotion more intensively than their predecessors; and they turned away more definitively from the old principles of art and the wisdom of the ages.

In this way they marked out the main course which poetry was to follow in our time. Browning, in spite of his now despised Victorianism, ought to have even more credit than Whitman as a grandfather of our "New Poetry". For under cover of his Victorian propriety he was able to foster, in the breast of solid British and American citizenry that was cold to Whitman, a thirst for sheer temperamentality in art. His readers could absorb from him a determined interest in "thoughts that break through language and escape". They could be initiated, without knowing it, into the cult of successful failure—that cult of impromptu and imperfection which Whitman was proclaiming with undisguised "barbaric yawp" in America. They could be assured that Browning, unlike Whitman, was a "truly spiritual man" even while learning from him how "pleasant is this flesh":

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground, upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Whitman postponed his book on the soul until he should have finished with "the body and existence". He never got around to the second volume. It was really redundant. He had already given body to whatever he knew of soul. But Browning's method was different: he *interleaved* body with soul. He insisted upon the soul, never subtly, but emphatically and at frequent intervals. His readers could find in his poetry the kind of religion they had been brought up on. But they found it accommodated to urgent human appetites. They found Christianity with the Cross omitted. They found their old accus-

tomed Deity—but He had now entirely doffed his age-old pre-occupation with righteousness and self-control, and was now largely functioning as a guarantor of human love-affairs :

Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned His way through the world to this.

To be sure, these lines from "The Statue and the Bust" are quite exceptional in Browning's work. Rarely did he say, or know, so plainly just what he meant. He belonged, by heritage and habit, to the party of St. Paul; by destiny, to the "Children of Adam". Unawares, he fed the Whitmanian fire in the subconscious regions of the Victorian Browningite. This person's grandchildren, therefore, are eagerly reading, writing, and trying to write, our current literature of sheer desire.

That Browning's aversion from the wisdom of human experience was not quite so extensive as Whitman's, and not nearly so declamatory, was due to difference in circumstances rather than in mental capacities. The more one may be aware of Browning's superiority to Whitman in brains, the less ought one to praise whatever advantage he had in the matter of wisdom. For when one reviews all the fortunate circumstances of his life—his place of residence, his books, his friends—one's wonder grows that a man of exceptional mind should extract from such facilities exceptionally little wisdom. The wonder of the Browning-lover, to be sure, is in the opposite direction. He finds, here, striking evidence of Browning's uniqueness. He admires the sturdy individualism that enabled the poet to frequent great cities without suffering the imprint of civil institutions; to read and love classic literature without being moulded by the classic spirit; and to move genially among those who considered his thought "muddy" and his art lacking in "the eternal harmonies", without being swerved an inch from the path of his own genius. Such instances, however, serve to bring out Browning's kinship with Whitman. His cities were indeed older than Whitman's, his knowledge of the classics was wider, and his friends were more critical. But his successful resistance of these heavier pressures merely proves that he was even more

Whitmanian than Whitman; and the Browningite is unreasonable in refusing to be equally enthusiastic about the sturdy individualism of Whitman.

To the same quality of individualism must be attributed also that social modesty which, on a superficial view, seems widely to distinguish Browning from his twin across the Atlantic. Whitman was less modest because he was more gregarious. Only in constantly asserting his individuality could he feel vividly aware that he possessed it. Browning's individualism was so impassible that, though on a few occasions he slightly shocked society, he generally felt small need of social self-assertion. To surprised visitors who were familiar with the tone of his verse, he appeared the most modest of men, for the very reason that internally he was the most self-confident of poets. In republishing the atrocious "*Sordello*", unrevised, after a quarter of a century of criticism, he remarks: "I blame nobody, least of all myself, who did my best then and since". He regarded himself and the reading public as travelling on different trains. At junctions he could genially talk with it through the car-windows about the weather; but he could see no gain in discussing with it the direction of their respective journeys. No doubt the persistent inability of the general reader to switch over to his track lent strength to his conviction that eternity consists of a net-work of separate travellings, conducted at a high rate of speed.

Browning's resistance to mental influences was indeed strengthened, unlike Whitman's, by an imposing panoply of ideas, and he was intellectually precocious. The Browningite has wonderingly pointed out that by the age of twenty-three the poet had adopted in all its essentials the "philosophy" that runs, or twists, through the whole fabric of his work. But patient Time has more and more untwisted that philosophy and displayed its inadequacy. Nowadays the wonder must be, not that Browning adopted it so early, but that a man of his intelligence could cling to it so long. The solution of this paradox is that Browning's mind, like Whitman's and unlike Keats's, was really averse from philosophy. In the periphery of life, in the

detail of nature and human nature, Browning displayed continually a very sharp discrimination. But when turned upon the central principles of life, his critical intelligence became blunt; when turned upon his own favorite set of ideas, it lost its edge completely.

Nature, in refusing to Browning a philosophic mind, gave him a temperament that demanded a set of fixed ideas. Here again he parallels Whitman. Each of the two, in giving himself joyously to the surge of his immediate emotions, felt the need of "some elected point of central rock", in Browning's phrase, for the waters to whirl around. Browning's elected creed was more sharply defined than Whitman's, and needed to be so, because the whirl of his emotions, superficial opinions to the contrary, was more strenuous. But the point is that each elected at the beginning of his career a sort of rough and ready creed, and continued to the end to revolve around it. A miniature reproduction of this rotatory process was painted by Browning in the case of each of his chief *dramatis personæ*. In the cases of Paracelsus, Sordello, Djabal, Luria, and the rest, where the poet's stress (as he phrased it) "lay on the incidents in the development of a soul what happens is not mental development but emotional revolution". The "soul" revolves in a continually widening or narrowing orbit, around a certain center, which is always close to the poet's own creed, if not identical with it. This phenomenon is most striking in Browning's aged persons. If they always evince the fire of youth which their creator never lost, they do not evince the wisdom of eld which he never gained. The much-praised Pope in "The Ring and the Book" must be pronounced, if attentively studied, a notable failure. He was designed by Browning to embody the wisdom not only of old age but of accumulated centuries. But in character he is really no older than the young graybeards who arouse our affectionate enthusiasm in "A Grammarian's Funeral", "Rabbi Ben Ezra", and the Epilogue to "Asolando". The momentous decision made by the Pope would have been the same if he had been twenty-six years old instead of eighty-six, and if he had never read a line of the old records he holds in his hand. His extensive analysis of the case before him is supererogatory, for in the event his

judgment proves to be simply the crest of a strong wave of sympathetic emotion. That which is most vital in the Pope is Whitmanian. His creed is what Browning's had been from youth to age.

Whitman's creed was Emerson passed through the genial materialism of mid-century America. Browning's was Shelley passed through the popular "enlightened" Protestantism of mid-century England. Thus, though keenly conscious of originality, and of *not* uttering "the word *en-masse*". Browning was similar to Whitman in vulgarizing the thought of his immediate predecessor. The characteristic thought of the English Romantic movement was in its highest creative phase from Wordsworth to Emerson: Emerson's work was the noble culmination of it. Carlyle, Tennyson, Arnold, and others, though marked in varying degrees by the Romantic outlook, were in certain respects engaged in a reaction from it. They felt its inadequacy to meet the growing complexity of life under democratic, scientific, and industrial conditions. They saw the need of qualifying it in the light of human history, and they called for certain restrictions upon the sway of surging desires and aspirations. Quite the reverse was the trend of Browning and Whitman. They, too, felt the growing complexity of the time; but they wished to simplify it by inundating it with a still heavier stream of individualistic emotionalism. They called for a more headlong trust in natural feelings, and a completer aversion from reflection.

Their message in itself was a popular one—it always has been. But ironically enough it rendered its present bearers incapable of delivering it in popular form. Their zest for "life immediate" led them to improvise modes of utterance which could not have immediate appeal. Their procedure was factitiously unfactitious. Their effort for naturalness was itself unnatural; they tried too hard to let themselves go. As their inner life was a spirited flow of soliloquy, their need, as artists, was to discern its natural courses and to develop its natural banks. Instead, they just kept damming and undamming it, as boys do a stream, to make it go like anything. Often, at the fortunate moment between stagnation and muddy onrush, they won the clean curve of great poetry. They had in common a distinguished gift for the dra-

matic presentation of emotional moments. In such fine pieces as "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing" and "Oh, to be in England now that April's there", our two poets are at their best and they are close together. The pity of it is that their special gift, owing to their aversion from poetic reflection, remained in Whitman very rudimentary, and in Browning highly unstable. Browning, of course, succeeded in doing quite a number of short dramatic pieces that are close to perfection, and that read like developed nodes of the Whitmanian soliloquy. Whitman should have developed the dramatic concentrations that appeared, continually and fleetingly, in the stream of his impressions. Browning should have learnt to stem the current of his dramatic zest, when it began to carry him onto shoals—when it tempted him to assume viewpoints, and to attempt analyses, of which he was not artistically capable. And Elizabeth Barrett's intuition was a true one, notwithstanding the Browningite's iterated indignation at her meddling, when she wrote to him in 1864: "*Now let us have your own voice speaking of yourself.*"

Browning could vividly reproduce temperament, and the conquest of a weaker feeling by a stronger one. But he could not veraciously represent character, in so far as character means the bringing of temperament under any rational and ethical control. At its worst, his poetry tries to demonstrate, as in "By the Fireside" and "The Statue and the Bust", that the effects of character can be attained through sheer quantity of emotion. Continually—as with Festus, Sebald, Jules, Mildred, Tresham, Djabal, Aniel, Luria, Norbert and his Queen—he dashes streaks of character upon patches of temperament in such a criss-cross fashion that the result resembles a cubist painting. The contradiction becomes glaring in proportion as the poet insists that the personage in question should be regarded as a normal human being. For example, Festus in "Paracelsus"! This charming and enlightened pastor, a lifelong devotee of moderation, is suddenly made to submerge his whole habit of thought in order to countenance the transcendent balderdash of Browning's hero, Paracelsus himself. The poem was written when the poet had only recently attained his majority; but the fault was a recurrent incident in "the devel-

opment of his soul". Twenty years later he sketched essentially the same situation in Norbert in "In a Balcony". The laborious and successful statesman, represented as being much in love but not blinded by love, suddenly drops his practiced insight to acquiesce in the absurd policy of his mistress, Constance, whose twisted emotionalism the poet is mainly interested in following out and analyzing.

Browning was dramatically veracious when, avoiding character in the stricter sense of the word, he succeeded in concentrating his art upon simple instances of temperament. Accordingly, animate nature, together with childhood and other states "close to nature", offered him a rich field, which he might well have cultivated more fully. He had a larger share than Whitman of the Whitmanian dramatic sympathy with animals, and with natural objects fancifully conceived as animate. Lizards and plants are sometimes his most effective *dramatis personæ*; and such superb creatures as his Lion in "The Glove"—above all, his Caliban—suggest that a long visit to the tropics would have been more fruitful for him, poetically, than his extended brooding upon the old volume which served as source for "The Ring and the Book". In the human realm, Browning could give a fine enough etching of a temperament obtrusively different from his own—Andrea del Sarto, the Duke in "My Last Duchess", the Bishop in "St. Praxed's Church". But he was most successful with personages warmly resembling himself—such as Pippa, The Grammarian, Karshish, the numerous "speakers" of semi-dramatic lyrics, the heroine of "The Flight of the Duchess", and above all the incomparable Fra Lippo. Here he simply projected the traits of his own emotional life into circumstances remote from normality, and created dramatic illusions that richly refresh us when we wish to withdraw from the tests of society and character. And it is here that Browning's art appears most clearly as simply a heightened mode of the Whitman soliloquy.

But it is too bad that subsequent poets, unable to reproduce the superb temperamental quality of Browning and Whitman, should continue to reproduce their vast lack of understanding.

G. R. ELLIOTT.

Amherst College.

THE BIRTH OF THE BRAHMINS

Unlike all respectable, normally constituted literatures, American literature grew up backwards. In all other literatures of which I know, there is a fairly regular succession of literary forms; lyric succeeds epic, drama follows, prose history is born, and finally the essay and the novel appear. But in American Literature our two earliest writers—freaks and museum specimens aside—are Cooper the novelist and Irving the essayist. Drama came later—one hundred years later—and the American epic is still in the womb of time. This is both disconcerting and reprehensible in the eyes of all literary students. There is still another instance of American literary precocity. Criticism is usually one of the latest of literary forms to emerge; not so in this astonishing country. We have an American criticism before we have an American literature to criticise.

It began in Boston, of course. In the winter of 1814, there was in that city an organization known as the Anthology Club. It was composed of clergymen and lawyers, all Harvard graduates, all interested in literature, and all highly patriotic. It galled their souls, naturally enough, to be compelled to turn for news of what was going on in the literary world to that organ of British arrogance, the *Edinburgh Review*, every issue of which carried at least one sneer at America and America's valiant attempts to create for herself a literature. The fathers of these Anthologists had fought at Bunker Hill and Concord for the political independence of the United States. It was obviously the duty of their no-less-valiant sons to establish a like independence in the world of literature. And the first step toward that desired but never attained end, was the formation of an American literary organ—an American Review.

Willard Phillips, A. H. Everett, R. H. Dana, Walter Channing, J. G. Palfrey—how their very names smell of Boston, Harvard College, and the Congregational-Unitarian war!—were the originators of the project. To them came William Tudor, commercial gentleman, fresh from Europe, filled with plans of his own for an American rival of the *Edinburgh*. With him the Anthologists

joined forces, and in May, 1815, under the editorship of Mr. Tudor, the first number of the *North American Review* was issued. American literary criticism was born.

It was a curious production, this grandfather of that mighty family, the American magazine. A glance through its time-yellowed pages carries us back a hundred years, straight into the heart of a past—not that past as exhumed, mummified, by the researches of historians, but the past alive, regarding itself in its own looking-glass.

The magazine opens with an article, the first of a long series, on "Books Relating to North America"—the patriotic motive at work. This is followed by letters to the editor, dealing with such various topics as "The Hours of Public Worship", "The Improvement of Mail Coaches", and "The Modern Love of Scandal"—utility and morality meeting together. There is a long article on the Memoirs of Baron Grimm. There is a violent attack on the *Edinburgh* for its violent attacks on America. There is a review of "Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse", by Miss Lydia Huntly. There is an extended notice of the endowment of a Professorship of Greek in Harvard College. Finally, there is a list of books newly published in America—mainly controversial theology and piratings from England. In succeeding issues, we have accounts of the proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; we have addresses delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society; we have an occasional sermon. Harvard and its news, indeed, supply a good part of the material in these early volumes—volumes through which one can see solemn, white-haired old gentlemen, graduates of the college, pillars of the Old South Church, seated in quiet studies on Beacon Street, nodding their heads in grave approval over the patriotic, moral, academic pages.

Mr. Tudor, the first editor, seems to have been a versatile gentleman, since from his prolific pen flowed about three-fourths of the entire first volume. His first critical article, which is also the first piece of criticism in the Review, is a notice of "Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse", by Miss Lydia Huntly. I wonder who she was? The article is not, perhaps, a critical masterpiece: but one sentence from it deserves the honor of quotation.

The whole of the passage ending with the lines,

'No slightest breath her bosom cheered,
Her own soft wings alone she HEARD.'

If not sublime, which we think it to be, will at least be allowed by all to be exquisitely beautiful and pathetic.

Three more reviews, of Scott and Leigh Hunt, are from Mr. Tudor's pen. They lack the note of distinction that characterized the sentence quoted above; they are merely dull. But Tudor's longest and most ambitious article, "On Models in Literature", is not half bad. It is in the main a highly patriotic plea for a native American literature, truly native, not borrowed. In the service of originality, it deals hard blows at the then-prevailing Latinolatry, and its remarks on the advisability of discarding models and returning to nature sound like the first faint stirrings of romanticism in this country. But Mr. Tudor's talents were rather commercial than critical, and in 1816 he left the *Review*, and finished his days in the consular service. At least he knew the sublime from the pathetic.

For the next fifteen years, the *Review* remained in the hands of the original Anthologists. They formed a close corporation, a most unified group, and though the editorial title was passed from hand to hand, the *Review* through this period is the work of the group as a whole. Only one of the circle, R. H. Dana, Senior, can be called a professional man of letters, and in many respects he stands apart from his fellows. The true representatives are Jared Sparks, clergyman and biographer; E. T. Channing, lawyer and Harvard professor; Willard Phillips, lawyer; A. H. Everett, clergyman; J. G. Palfrey, clergyman and local historian; and Edward Everett, clergyman, Harvard professor, orator, and statesman. The work of these men is so similar, with one exception, that I shall consider the group as a whole. Alike in antecedents, in training, in social position, in theological opinions, they are singularly alike in literary creed. Furthermore, they were writing for a small and homogeneous public. Their work is marked throughout by one prevailing set of attitudes, judgments, opinions, prejudices. Never were critics more certain of themselves. They knew who was who among contemporary writers. There were exactly four great living English poets—Byron, Campbell, Words-

worth, Scott. As to the precise ranking of these four men, with respect to one another, there seems to have been some doubt. Byron is generally the favorite for first place, though his personal profligacy and literary licentiousness militate greatly against him. We admit his greatness, but we do not approve of him. As for his satellite, Moore, whom we are compelled to consider, since he is astoundingly popular, he is thoroughly bad, both as a man and as a poet. That there were other Englishmen writing poetry at this time, our reviewers never seem to have realized. It is not until 1829 that the names of Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley appear in the pages of the *Review*, and then they are mentioned merely as gentlemen who have written some verse.

In the novel, the field of serious critical consideration is even more limited. While one is compelled at times to review the ephemeral—"Demetrius", "Yamoyden, a Tale", "Anastasius", are among the forgotten titles—one reserves one's serious admiration for two and only two novelists,—Scott and Miss Edgeworth. I have remarked on the difficulty in distinguishing between the writings of various members of the group. But one there is who stands out—A. H. Everett. Whether he discusses Voltaire or Byron, or the tales of St. Pierre, or the literary tendencies of the Eighteenth Century, he always comes around to Scott. Scott comes first; Edgeworth next. There are no others.

But in spite of their admiration for these giants of the Romantic school, the reviewers are not Romanticists. Romanticism, as a body of literary doctrine, has not arrived in Boston as yet; our critics are still thinking in the Eighteenth Century. In 1817, a year before the appearance of "Endymion", Willard Phillips can still assert, with a dogmatic certainty that carries one back to the days of Bysshe, that the heroic couplet is the greatest of all English metres. Dr. Johnson himself might have written this mixture of a priori and morals:

In addition to that strong sense of natural beauty, without which no man can be a poet, he has shown throughout a vein of true pathos, without which the most splendid poetry soon grows tiresome. The sentiments are often fine and striking, always just, noble, and generous.

And as late as 1830, I find one critic declaring, with the air of one stating a commonplace:

Pope carried the sustained harmony and sweetness of English versification to a degree unexcelled before. It is difficult to detect much that is delicate and harmonious in the earlier English poets. The rhymes of Chaucer form no exception to this remark.

Writing for a New England public, with over half of their number clerics, our reviewers are naturally somewhat inclined to the moral view of literature. Even Mr. Tudor, the commercial critic, declaims in an aside against "the wild licentiousness of our times". And he is a liberal. Of his six successors, three are clergymen. We congratulate ourselves, therefore, that "the theory which treats of beauty, as of something independent of moral effect is still without advocates among us." We regret that "the moral effect of the drama has not in general been of the most exalted kind". We are glad to find a novel "replete with profound practical wisdom, conveyed in a vigorous and massy style". Dogmatically we pronounce that "there can be no more hideous fault in a literary work than profligacy. Levity is next in order". Fortunately, we are not acquainted with Rabelais. We wish, however, that Shakespeare might have followed Spenser's excellent example, and furthered virtue by poetry, instead of wasting his time depicting "the essentially coarse and vulgar mind of Falstaff".

As I have pointed out, the patriotic motive was one of the chief reasons for the foundation of the *Review*. It was the first literary advocate of one-hundred-per-cent Americanism. Our critics are continually calling for an American literature to appear—a really American literature, smacking of the soil, purged of old world influences. With a curious national inferiority complex, they are continually resenting the slights of the *Edinburgh*, and at the same time aping that publication most sedulously. They attempt the same magisterial air; they have the same trick of making a book a mere text for a sermon on all things in general. And they are continually pointing out, to that same contemptuous magazine, that there is an American literature, numbering among its classics Jefferson, Fisher Ames, and the Rev. Dr. Buckminster.

It is easy, and not quite fair, perhaps, to poke fun at the strenuous strivings of these estimable gentlemen. After all, they had a difficult job to do, a job that needed doing, and in their

peculiar way they accomplished much. They felt themselves to be—and they were—the schoolmasters of a new literature. A. H. Everett's numerous articles on French literature, Prescott's Italian discoveries, Edward Everett's wanderings into German, all helped to introduce these literatures to a raw American public. And in making these introductions, the *North American* established one of the most serviceable traditions in American magazine editing. One of the chief functions of the American magazine from that day to this has been the cosmopolitanization of the American taste—a work of incalculable value to our literature. I suspect, though there is no means of proving this, that the *Review* actually helped in the production of better American books. It was receptive. Willard Phillip's heroic couplet heresy is more than atoned for by his acceptance for publication of "Thanatopsis".

At first, in fact, the *Review* decidedly errs on the side of leniency whenever it undertakes to discuss an American book. This is natural, and hardly blameable. The magazine was an experiment, its very life most fragile and delicate. It could not afford to make enemies within its own public. And so, for two or three years, every American book that appears it hailed with joy. Bryant's review of the history of American poetry, published in 1818, marks the beginning of a more discriminating criticism. Bryant knew good poetry and bad; he had even then a rock-bound severity of temper; and he did not hesitate to call a worthless poem bad. The only two American authors of any size who appeared during the first decade of the *Review*'s existence were Cooper and Irving. Both were received with high appreciation.

Personally, I find the review of "The Spy", appearing in 1823, far superior in its judgments of Cooper than a great part of the Cooper criticism written later, and by critics of far greater fame. The author of this bit does not belong to our original group. His name was Gardiner. I guess—and this is merely a guess—that he is the John Sylvester Gardiner who was rector of Trinity, Boston, from 1805 to 1830. Of all the contributors of the *Review* during its first decade, he is by far the best critic. Possibly the fact that he was an ungodly Episcopalian may help to explain his critical differences from his contemporaries of the *Anthology*

group. His particular field is the novel. His views on Cooper are sound, a judicious mixture of praise and blame. His attacks on the bad novels of the period are both vigorous and lively. And his long essay on "Novel-Writing" shows surprising divergences from the prevailing Scott-Edgeworth cult. He actually praises realism. He ventures to say, in the face of the persisting Eighteenth Century dogma of the hierarchy of literary forms, that the novel is superior to the epic, since it is more real. He is even weak on the moral side; he approves of Shakespeare's lack of moral teaching, a lack so much deplored by the sounder theologians of the *Review*.

There is one other man who stands apart from the group with which he was associated—R. H. Dana, Senior. Dana is the only man of these early days of the *Review* who has maintained the slightest vestige of a literary reputation,—though he survives as a name only. Unlike his associates—lawyers, clergymen, teachers, to whom literature was merely an elegant relaxation—Dana was something like a professional man of letters. And he strikes a note of his own. While his friends were still writing and thinking in the Eighteenth Century, as far as literary doctrines were concerned, while Pope and the heroic couplet still ruled in literary Boston, Dana was preaching high Romanticism. As early as 1819 he dared to assert, and it was an assertion that must have taken courage at the time, that Pope, the monarch of English poetry, was not a poet at all. The origin of that faith is evident. And Dana's critical ancestry is further shown by his inflated Shelley-and-water disquisitions on the high spiritual virtues of poetry. He is a thorough Wordsworthian in his praise of nature and the simple life; Wordsworthian also in his severity toward Thomson, convicted of the crime of using poetic diction. He speaks highly of the criticism of Coleridge, though he gives no indications of using Coleridge's critical methods. But in spite of all these romantic leanings, he still believes in "The Rules", and we find him attacking Hazlitt because that unsystematic gentleman makes a new definition of poetry to fit every new poet he reads. Dana's notions of prose style—I'm not sure what his notions of prose style were; something strange, at any rate. He finds fault with Irving, whom he appreciates in many respects, because Irving writes a bad style. He attacks Hazlitt, in whom he can see much that is good,

on the grounds of style. Perhaps Dana took his own style as a model. It is far different from the styles of Irving and Hazlitt; heavy, turgid, portentous, Johnson without Johnson's music. Whipple assures us that Dana's best work was done in the field of criticism. I have not read his poetry. It must be very bad. Some of the attributes of a critic Dana had—genuine love for literature, for his time, a fresh viewpoint. But like nearly all the critics of his age, he was more interested in many other things than in literature. After 1820, he plunged into the Unitarian controversy—he had always been an amateur theologian, even in his critical days—and was lost to literature.

About 1824, two younger writers began to make themselves heard in the columns of the *North American*. F. W. P. Greenwood, Harvard graduate and Unitarian clergyman, does not quite belong to the older Anthology group, being separated by differences both in age and in critical viewpoint. He first appears in the *Review* as the author of an article on Wordsworth. Defective, old-fashioned, the article is nevertheless noteworthy for two things. Greenwood points out, clearly, sharply, that Wordsworth's unpopularity is largely due to the logical pursuit of his theory of poetry. And to account for the rest of his non-success, Greenwood merely remarks, with a sensible brevity that is refreshing after the wordy labyrinths of Dana, "He talks too much." Plain speaking like that was rare in those days of critical dignity—and critical dullness. There is a promise in the man, but again it is a promise never fulfilled. The moral complex was too strong for the Rev. Mr. Greenwood. He joined the anti-Byronists—Everett, Andrews Norton, Phillips—whose constant attacks on the noble lord are one of the few exciting features of the *Review* in these early days. Thus, Greenwood denounces Pinkney, not because Pinkney is a second-hand poet, not because he imitates, but because he imitates Byron, rather than worthier and more upright models. And Greenwood approves highly of Hillhouse's "Hadad", an "ornament and bright addition to the literature of our country", mainly because its scene is laid in Palestine, and its characters bear resounding Biblical names.

At about the same time as Greenwood, appeared another critic—critics; I am always forgetting. They are the Peabody twins,

whom a cruel but jocular parent had named Oliver William Bourn and William Bourn Oliver. They were a prolific pair; between them they contributed some seventy-odd articles to the pages of the *Review*. They represent, in fullest perfection, the critical, moral, social ideas of the Anthology Club school of critics, and they carry that tradition on in the *Review* for twenty years after the last Anthologist had ceased to contribute.

II. 1830-40.

In 1831 A. H. Everett became editor, and with his assumption of office, the *Review* entered on a new phase of its existence. The old, original group, the founders, were dying out. Dana, Phillips, Sparks, Channing—by 1830 they had all ceased writing for the magazine. Everett, though still in charge, did little actual critical writing after that date. Times were changing, and the *Review* changed with them.

The decade was a period of awakening in American literature. A mere inspection of the titles of the books reviewed, as year after year they make their appearance in the files of the *Review*, gives one who has the historical sense something of a thrill. One feels the strivings and stirrings of a literature being born. There had been American authors before. But with the exceptions of Cooper and Irving, every American writer whose books had come before the critics for review during the first fifteen years of the magazine's existence is today either completely dead, buried, forgotten, or surviving only as embalmed in the alcohol of historical research. But with 1830, living names begin to appear. The great American novelist of the earlier period, if one may base comparative greatness on comparative space in the reviews, was Miss Catherine Sedgewick. Has anyone alive ever read "Redwood", or "Hope Leslie", or "The Linwoods"? She persists in the thirties, but she now has rivals—Nathaniel Hawthorne, for one, whose "Twice Told Tales" make a very slight stir in 1837. Dana is superseded by Longfellow, the fair-haired child of American poetry and the *Review's* best particular favorite. Sprague is matched by Holmes. Whittier and Willis and Lowell are making themselves felt. Emerson is beginning to reign in Concord. American literature is awake.

With 1830, it becomes more difficult to generalize concerning the *Review*. One can treat the earlier group in a body on account of their remarkable unanimity of opinion on all points—literary, moral, political, social. Through the thirties we have neither sharply defined groups nor dominating figures. But certain tendencies can be made out.

The Eighteenth Century was slowly passing away—very slowly. The prolific Peabody twins, the chief survivors through this decade of the earlier reviewers, continue to uphold the good old traditions. It was Oliver W. B. P. who in 1830 was still telling the public that English literature began with Pope. And in 1832 the historian Prescott, writing what purported to be a comprehensive survey of English literature in the Nineteenth Century, did not feel impelled to mention the names of Coleridge, Keats, or Shelley. But these are survivals. The prevailing trend of the time is represented better by an article on Coleridge which appeared in 1834, in which he is hailed as the greatest music-maker in English verse since the Elizabethans. This article, the sole contribution of one R. C. Waterston—and who he was I have not been able to discover—is the finest bit of poetical criticism in the *Review* up to that time. Instead of the feeble generalizations of the earlier critics, it picks out specifically the characteristics of the poet, and phrases them in an energetic, nervous manner. In the same year, there is an article on Crabbe, by Oliver W. B. Peabody, that goes far to make up for that gentleman's critical sins. It shows appreciation of Crabbe's realism, and still more wonderful, it is free from moralizings. Even the prolific twin responds to his time. In 1835, Everett introduced the American public to Carlyle, who was still a joke to British critics. And C. C. Felton, Professor of Greek at Harvard, friend of Longfellow, and one of the chief contributors during this decade, boldly casting aside the traditional canons of criticism, makes use of Coleridge's famous three questions.

Emerson's "Milton", which appeared in 1838, is the first bit of prose in the *Review* which can be called literature; but it is an isolated phenomenon. Of the critics of this decade, one only deserves treatment as an individual—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Of Longfellow as a critic, pure and simple, I do not think very highly. He has left us but one article on contemporary

literature—a review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*. It is one of those generalized panegyrics which with only a change of proper names might serve as well for William Shakespeare, or Charles Baudelaire, or William Lisle Bowles. Longfellow's service to criticism—and some service he did perform—was of another nature. As a general introduction to his criticism, we may take this article on Sidney's "Defence of Poesie". The article is in itself a Defence of Poetry. I know of nothing which impresses on one more fully the essentially anti-literary character of the American public of the early nineteenth century than the fact that nearly every critic of poetry during the period found it necessary to apologize for his subject, to plead for it on moral and utilitarian grounds. They sound obvious, almost silly today, these poetic apologies of Lowell's and Dana's and Longfellow's; but they are evidently to meet a very definite need. It is interesting to note Longfellow's grounds of defence.

Poetry neither enervates the mind nor unfits it for the practical duties of life.

Nor is it less true, that the legitimate tendency of poetry is to exalt, rather than to debase—to purify, rather than to corrupt.

These two statements compose the main thesis of his article; he defends them with a passionate earnestness that is in itself evidence of the reality of the anti-literary forces opposed. Again and again he asserts that poetry *is* an aid to virtue, that poetry *is*, in the highest sense, true. He is a missionary of literature in a money-grabbing, psalm-singing world.

This is the prelude to a series of five articles:

The Origin and Progress of the French Language
History of the Italian Language and Dialects
Spanish Moral and Devotional Poetry
Spanish Language and Literature
Tegner's Frithiof's Saga.

These are not criticism, but propaganda. The first of the series reads like, and is, an introduction to mediaeval French Literature for the American public. Like an elementary text, it begins with the Strasburg oaths; it is filled with quotations, examples. Noteworthy are Longfellow's own verse renderings of the Troubadour

poets; noteworthy also the fact that the essay ends with Malherbe. Similar in nature and aim are the other articles of the group; all important, as marking the beginnings of that cult of mediaevalism in America which has produced some of our finest literary scholarship. For this work of introducing mediaevalism to the American public Longfellow was well qualified. He was not too good a scholar; therefore he does not run into dry-as-dust details: he was not enough in sympathy with the period to turn mystic or Romanist; therefore he did not frighten his public away. His own trick of writing little moral ditties, his intellectual nearness to his public, are admirable seconds to the enthusiasm which is his most valuable critical asset. He often falls into critical pitfalls ("Rabelais soon fatigues even the most quaint and curious"), but he is alive. His work stands out from the solemn, dreary pages of Felton, and Henry Ware, and the Rev. J. G. Palfrey, readable, illuminated by the freshness of his enthusiasm. He was not a great critic, nor even a good one; he was an excellent propagandist.

III. 1840-50.

The third period in the early history of the *North American* really begins, not in 1840, but in 1843, when Francis Bowen became editor. Mr. Bowen was the first editor of the *Review* who was a professional literary man. He had traveled abroad, and apparently had managed to acquire on foreign soils a somewhat more liberal and literary spirit than had actuated his predecessors. He had himself many of the qualities of the literary critic. He loved a row; and under his consulship the *Review*, which under Everett had grown duller and duller year by year, took on a decided note of journalistic liveliness. It was under Bowen that Felton and Poe fell to blows; Felton is to be remembered as the man who first applied to Poe the epithet "forcible—feeble". In Bowen, the patriotic impulse became militant. Significantly, his second critical article is a review of Cooper's "Homeward Bound." And his later production, "The Morals, Manners, and Poetry of England", is a rousing swashbuckling reply to British criticism of America. He even ventured to turn his critical weapons on natives of sacred Boston. He makes a vigorous attack on Channing and Emerson, on a common sense basis, and as far

as he goes, he is quite right. Of course, like practically all destructive critics, he does not go far enough, but that is another question. He later rebukes Lowell, at a time when Lowell was one of the *Review's* most promising young contributors. "We are forgetting the object of our sermon—which is to teach poets to mind their own concerns, and not to quarrel with the world or the critics". And all that because Lowell had ventured, in a review of Browning, to protest against some current methods of criticizing poetry.

Bowen's chief critical field is the novel. In his travels abroad, the worthy editor had acquired a taste for French fiction—dangerous things, that worked sad havoc with the moral tone of his criticism. Writing of the novels of Paul de Kock, he feels compelled to utter a few reproving words concerning that novelist's moral tone; but he obviously enjoys reading the lively Frenchman. Of Dumas he holds the opinion, which has been maintained by later critics, that Dumas is greater as playwright than as novelist. Dickens he early acclaims, though he takes a few shots at the "American Notes". But that was to be expected. Good critic, better journalist and editor, Bowen fathered a group of young men, the literary radicals of their day.* With their help he filled the arteries of the *Review*, which under Everett had begun to assume a strangely corpse-like aspect, with fresh and coursing blood.

Motley the historian belongs to this group, though he wrote but one critical article. But that, a study of Balzac, is as revolutionary a document in its way as the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. It is a direct counterblast to practically all criticism of the novel which had ever been printed in the *Review*. Motley declares that he envies the French their liberty of speech in literature. He commends Balzac as a writer neither moral nor immoral, but a calm and profound observer of the human spectacle. And his statement, "Certainly the world should be reformed, but not by novel writers", is a direct slap in the face of the venerable fathers of the *Review*.

Under Bowen, Lowell first joined the forces of the *Review*, not as the dignified and snobbish arbiter he was to become in the

* Bower was that rare and beautiful specimen, a political reactionary with a turn for literary and moral radicalism.

seventies and eighties, but as a decidedly flippant and fresh young tail-twister. Lowell's particular critical function at this time was the carrying on, but with a far more receptive public, of the romantic propaganda started by Dana thirty years before. Like Longfellow he is an apologist for poetry, more vivacious, more humorous, decidedly sharper-tongued than the gentle poet of "The Children's Hour."

But the most important of Bowen's finds, the man who more than any other gave the critical pitch of the *Review* during this decade, was Edwin Percy Whipple. Whipple's criticism, like that of his part contemporary, Poe, has been almost forgotten. And yet he is of great historical importance, since with him and Poe, criticism in America first becomes self-conscious. Before their time it was merely accidental and incidental, the leisure occupation of cultivated gentlemen. But with Poe and Whipple, criticism was both a business and an art. They knew what they were doing.

Whipple is, I think, the first instance of the self-trained man in American letters. Early left an orphan, he had no college experience, began, unpromisingly, as a bank clerk, and developed into a lecturer and a librarian. The results of this career are visible in his criticism. His essay on Macaulay reveals clearly enough his critical ancestry. It stands out from the general stodginess of clergymen and professors by virtue of its directness and vigor. He writes of Macaulay in the Macaulayan manner. In this essay we find a foreshadowing of all the qualities Whipple was to manifest as a critic. It is sharply written, full of enthusiasm for its subject, keen in characterization. But it is occupied wholly with Macaulay the stylist and historian. It shows no comprehension whatever of Macaulay's complete failure to write understandingly of pure literature.

Whipple early acquired the Macaulay trick of making the ostensible subject of his review a mere point of departure for a lengthy disquisition on any wholly unrelated topic on which it pleased his fancy to dilate. Thus his first article, which pretends to be a review of Talfourd's critical work, is really a discussion of British periodical criticism in the first quarter of the century. It reveals two important things—Whipple's interest in criticism for its own sake, and his journalistic tendency.

His next attempt, a review of Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America", was less fortunate in its subject matter. It contains some extraordinary dicta. Mr. Dana is our most original poet. Pinkney is as good a lyrist as any of the Cavalier school. The "Psalm of Life" is heroic; and with Longfellow in general, "the thought is more important than the manner of saying it".* But these remarkable misses are partly balanced by his recognition that "The Spanish Student" is a poem, never a play, and by Whipple's apt characterization of Whittier as too hot and overfluent.

A series of minor articles followed, culminating in a long discussion of the British critics of the early Romantic period. This article, which appeared in 1845, is in many respects Whipple's critical masterpiece. Whipple had himself the judicial ideal of criticism. He had the hardness of head which is a prime requisite of criticism of criticism. He had an ear for prose, and he had himself a style in which to express his ideas—Macaulayan, keen-edged, always thoroughly alive. He was close enough to the *Edinburgh Reviewers* to see their point of view, enough like them in temperament to write of them with appreciation, yet far enough removed to see clearly their curious errors of judgment. The essay is the work of a man who recognized criticism as a separate branch of literature, who had a definite ideal of what criticism should be, and a keen mind to apply this ideal to actual practice. But perhaps Whipple's most pleasant quality is his evident appreciation of all writers, great and small, from Byron to Sidney Smith, who are really alive, and who write in a living style.

This article was followed by a group dealing with the great poets of the age just passing—Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley—a group which constitute a survey of English poetry in the nineteenth century; they are a direct challenge to the whole line of early critics who had dealt with these same men, though in a far different way. Whipple is the earliest critic in American literature, as far as I know, to give any evidence of the historical sense of literature, to look at movements, periods, not merely to

* Note. Perhaps Whipple was right, and the conventional opinion of Longfellow wrong.

inspect individuals. He is the first to recognize in any way—he may have learned this also from Macaulay—the real significance of the romantic movement. He does not commit the asininity of talking about Wordsworth, Coleridge, and—Campbell. He notes that curious literary phenomenon, the alternation of periods. He attempts to trace—faintly foreshadowing Taine—the effect of the French Revolution on the Romantic movement. He sees his writers against a background. Now all this sounds commonplace enough; it was no commonplace, but a startlingly original viewpoint, in America in 1845.

In fact, Whipple was a radical. Now of course a radical in 1845 and a radical in 1929 are two very different things. Whipple is not according to present standards highly dangerous. He is a New Englander, provided with a large part of the usual baggage of moral ideas that the New Englander of 1845 carried about with him. But to find a critic, in the *North American* of that period, when the world bloomed with Unitarian hope, objecting to G. P. R. James for his "rose-colored moral sentiments" is a bit surprising. Still more surprising is Whipple's evident sympathy with such iconoclasts as Shelley and Byron. The earlier critics were unanimous; Byron was a great poet and a bad man. But it is Byron the revolutionary whom Whipple praises. In fact, throughout these essays, the emphasis is always laid on the personality of the poet, not on the quality of the poetry. And that brings us to one of Whipple's great critical defects. When he comes to talk about men like Keats, and Coleridge, and Spencer—men who are merely poets, who write poetry that is merely poetry, Whipple is all at sea. He has nothing to say, and his silence seems to me to cover a lack of appreciation. Whipple, I fear, cared very little about mere poetry, mere literature. He was a little lacking on the aesthetic side, although thoroughly alive on the intellectual. And therein lies his greatest defect as a critic.

Whipple, in fact, is a direct descendant of the Edinburgh Reviewers, a Macaulay in little. He had Macaulay's gift for skinning bad authors; he is always vigorous, original, alive; he can deal with a novelist, a personality, a period, and do a good job. And for all his weakness on the side of the purely beautiful, he is by all odds the greatest critic writing in the *North American*

during our period, the only critic of the period who has any permanent value. And with him our survey ends.

By 1850, the *Review* had grown up. It had passed its infancy, nursed by talented clerical amateurs; it had come safely through its attack of moralistic measles; at last had emerged, pale but living, from the decline of the thirties. A reading public for criticism had been formed, and to mark the progress in civilized opinion of that public one has only to compare the literary tone of Willard Phillip's "Byron" of 1817 with Motley's "Balzac" of 1847. There is a vast development in those thirty years—a development to which the *Review* had made its great contribution.

Not only had the *Review* established itself. It had shown the way to others. In its wake had sprung up the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *New York Mirror*. The *Atlantic* was shortly to be established largely by young men whom Bowen had first introduced to the public. The aims of the patriotic members of the Anthology Club had been accomplished. America was no longer dependent on the *Edinburgh Review* for the statement of its literary opinions.

Criticism had ceased to be the elegant diversion of lawyers and ministers. Poe had written: Lowell had made a start: Whipple, George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, were making their critical contributions, large and small. The way was prepared for Henry James, Howells, Burroughs, Huneker, and H. L. Mencken. Criticism in America had ceased to be an experiment. It was an established fact.

GEORGE E. DEMILLE.

Green Island, N. Y.

REFLECTIONS OF AN AMERICAN-BORN EUROPEAN

The more chauvinistic among our compatriots are sometimes much given to boasting that America is the finest country on earth. This is a curious boast, no matter of what country it is made, and I have always been interested in its implications. I sometimes fancy it may mean no more than a man's pardonable predilection for his own rood of earth, as when a man loves one place more than another because the wind is less sharp there in winter, or because he was born there, or because the strawberries bear out Butler's contention that God could have made a finer fruit, but it is doubtful whether He did. Let us rather ignore for the nonce this more intimate side of man's preferences, and ask ourselves what an American really means when he maintains that America is the finest country in the world. Does he mean that America has the most ancient and the noblest history of all the nations of the world? He can hardly mean that. Does he mean that America has produced the finest art and literature in the world? No, not that. Does he mean that our manners are sweeter and more delicate than those of all other men? To maintain that statement would perhaps disprove it. Does he mean that man is fighting here his best fight against the evils which beset society? Hardly that, for many of these evils he ignores, or does not know them to be evils. . . . Quite obviously he means that the opportunity of securing material prosperity is greater in America than in any other country.

Is not this, to right-thinking men, a curious inversion of values? If it is true that an American believes his country to be the finest in the world because it is the richest, how can he cherish "the good life"? But we must not judge harshly. Not, indeed, lest we be judged, for the obligation to refrain from judging is not owing to any commandment; it lies rather in the possibility that we may not know all.

I have a belief that this great pride in material well-being is partly caused by our westward expansion, the winning of the West, as we call it. When Horace Greeley advised young

men to "Go West!" he cut off millions of Americans from their spiritual inheritance. So Roosevelt, when he said that the Mediterranean world was dead and that the Pacific would be the world of the future, bared his lack of insight and a dull sense of the reality of intangible things. Greeley advised young men to go West, not that they might help the West but to help themselves. It was easier to make a mark there. And Roosevelt, here at least, put the stamp of approval on this sort of materialism.

The El Dorado to which they pointed seems to me as unreal as the gold at the rainbow's end. Man's richest mine is not the gold fields but men. It is conceivable that the commerce of the Pacific will one day outstrip that of the Atlantic, as the Atlantic commonwealth has become of more material importance than the Mediterranean; but wealth, when acquired, seems not difficult to get. After people acquire a competency they desire something else; then they want power, such as social or political prestige, and when they become cultured and mature even those boons give way to more intangible things.

When the Pacific era dawns, the centre of wealth and material power may lie in the West, but the centre of culture will be in the East. A wise tolerance, gracious manners, and subtle appreciation will give literature and art a congenial home along the Atlantic littoral. Many a robust Westerner will sneer at a Puritan's descendant whose soul has acquired the sweet reasonableness of the English, or the *douceur* of the French. Others, whose eyes have been opened, will deftly probe the secret of delicate sentiments; they will come back to claim their inheritance.

I have myself just come back from France, where, according to my friends in the West, I stay too much. Santayana tells us that an Englishman's adventures are all external, and though I cannot think that blame or discredit is attached to internal adventures, I know why men are wary of them. My friends cannot savor my prejudices, and think them alien. They forget that these have ever been mine, for as Emerson said, Europe extends to the Alleghanies. It is not change in itself that man

objects to, but change he cannot understand. It is so much easier to be a cowboy than a cavalier.

There returned with me from France an American congressman, who, after roundly condemning the women of Europe who "smoke and drink" thanked God, in homely idiom, for a "generation of praying wives and mothers". Is our Congressman really so naïve as to think that milady who likes a cigarette never prays because of that? To this man, evidently, smoking is as great a sin as unkindness, drinking as much of an evil as insincerity. He is like Macaulay's puritan, who disliked bear baiting, not because it pained the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. Or else he cannot indulge a desire for polite amusements without losing himself, so, like Mohamet, whose stomach would not allow him to take wine, our Congressman cries "Why should others enjoy what I cannot?" Since the cup and cigarette "soil his addition", let him run away if he will; but let us know his action for what it is—weakness, not courage. Let us not credit him with the reasonable temperance of the lord of the manor; his is the light head of the man in the servants' hall.

The winning of the West, to come back to it, was without doubt a worthy undertaking; but, as Morley might say, if some spiritual ecstasy does not come with the end of the physical achievement it will have been rather animalistic than the noble thing we conceive it. When Emerson said that Europe extended to the Alleghanies, no doubt he thought that expansion meant the expansion of much that was best in Europe—Miltonic morals, Rousseauan sentiment, Voltairean tolerance. He could not see how in the process itself a counter influence might arise to bemean the very things he cherished, so that in the end men would not even be aware of "the dreary vacuity of soul which follows fullness of animal delight". So it must ever be with a centrifugal influence; true culture is always centripetal. Has America made the same mistake in trying to civilize herself that humanity made in its search for God? Our fathers sought God first in miracle and omen, rather than in nature and the heart. We may likewise

have deceived ourselves, in thinking that materialism and civilization are one and the same. When someone speaks of courtesy, or moral stamina, or spiritual energy, we find those terms uncomfortably vague. They are not concrete enough, and do not produce the desired "reaction". Yet have we really savoured their subtlest meaning when we say in the language of our advertisements, "The Smile PAYS", "The Sober Man GETS THE JOB", "Fifteen Minutes a Day WINS THE GIRL"?

Our man in the street considers himself a little better than the European, when he is merely more fortunate. He makes a law "to shut out the foreigner who is ruining the country", but he will find that the social and political ills he has endeavored to forestall have a way of evading all restrictions. In the language of the Immigration law, they turn out to be "*non-quota*". The reason is, of course, that they are innate in himself. Bolshevism, if it hadn't come from Russia, would have been born in our own industrial areas sooner or later. All the subtle maladies of Europe will yet walk the streets of Kansas City. The evils of Europe we shall inherit willy nilly.

The world lies East, where gods and men have made it. Certain treasures of mankind, and memories of gods, are laid up there forever, as in some ancestral mansion from which the daughters may not remove their legacies. Here the gods first looked into the eyes of men, and learned to love them. Here they contemplated their handiwork *de près*. It is holy ground in man's history. The Mediterranean world is beautiful and alive to-day, and men ever go back to their ancient dreams. Only in an old world can we realize the full complexity of civilization, or see the best play of mind upon mind and the manifestation of old sympathies and propensities. Do we not enjoy, like a male being, the possession of antique lands bathed in light and legend, and the spectacle of subtle feminine peoples? The commerce of the Pacific is not enough.

ABBOTT C. MARTIN.

SOMETHING ABOUT CABELL

That there is a mystery about the art of James Branch Cabell is a conclusion one arrives at after reading criticism about him. Even Hugh Walpole, in his article entitled "The Art of James Branch Cabell", interests himself in summaries and themes and occasionally mannerisms and again in turns of mind, scarcely ever mentioning his art. That a fiction writer can be an artist is a comparatively new idea, and the novelty of it may explain why Cabell's genius has been so superficially explored. But Cabell is not merely an artist; he is a painstaking, studious artist, careful of his words as a painter of his colors. So much is this true that a critic should approach him less with the rapt admiration of a votary than with respect and a desire to understand, for Cabell has created a mode of writing as unique as his personality in the world of letters.

With a good deal of reason Cabell rejects the name of novelist, preferring to call himself a "biographer" and his books, "biographies". And yet he cannot avoid comparison with works born legitimately in the family of the novel, for the "biographies" are of novel size and they follow, loosely enough, the architectural plan for a novel in that they take a character or group of characters through a series of adventures to a climax in which the final direction of character development is indicated.

Of all his longer works of fiction, a few are planned with artistic care to give the effect of unity and control—their plots are closely woven, continuous, and the parts inter-dependent. Foremost among these is the ingeniously designed *Domnei*, called by publisher's request *The Soul of Melicent*, the best conceived and best constructed book by Cabell. Showing lesser degrees of artistic plan are the realistic tales such as *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck*, *The Cords of Vanity*, and the distinctly juvenile tale, *The Eagle's Shadow*. Of the major Cabell works, *Jurgen* and *Figures of Earth*, one pauses short of denying them the state of novelhood, contenting himself at

least by noting that they are episodic and picaresque. As in the very inferior *Something About Eve*, events occur to the hero one after another in no orderly sequence, and after an assorted lot of adventures, chiefly erotic, comes the end with disillusionment and a weak compensation. For similar novels of earlier centuries we look to *Gil Blas*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, *Roderick Random*, or *Peregrine Pickle*. The difference is that the episodes in Cabell are likely to repeat one another, just as the characters repeat earlier ones—e. g. Gerald in *Something About Eve* duplicating the great Manuel. Cabell has too many antipathies to allow him to write a well-constructed novel. He begins his plot, but soon he is off on an experiment in words, or a crusade against philistinism, Woodrow Wilson, democracy,¹ or what not. The novel is left to take care of itself.

Yet there is a kind of unity in the "biographies". In Cabell's universe Romance is the force that propels things, and Romance consists of all those illusions (such as love, chivalry, religion, patriotism, and the like) which permit man to forget reality. The Cabellian heroes, in pursuit of a vision, journey into the unknown and after a series of erotic and esoteric adventures, find that the vision is unattainable; then, as grim reality comes back to take possession, they resign themselves and settle down to enjoy the irony of a fate which makes the elusive Unreal the only and abiding Real. Such a conception, gives undeniably, a sort of artistic unity to the series of tales. Furthermore, the effect of unity is heightened by the inclusion in the drama of a great many blood relatives and by continual allusion in one volume to characters who have elsewhere appeared. Scarcely a player is allowed to drop from the scene. He may for a time disappear, but almost certainly he sprouts up in a later volume. The common interpretation of this trait in the novels is, that it is part of a gigantic scheme,

¹ Certainly *Jurgen* and *Figures of Earth* are marred by such interpolations. See the strictures on Wilson—*Figures of Earth*, 74 and 170; and on the War—*Figures of Earth*, 172; and on democracy—*Jurgen*, 277-287 passim; and on philistinism—*Jurgen*, 231, 236, 349.

of cosmic proportions, to redact all types of life to a great novel of fifteen or more volumes. Such an interpretation would be easier to accept if it were not that the system of cross-reference and the re-introduction of a few characters were not a device used in certain interminable love serials, like *Helen and Warren* or *Revelations of a Wife*, to provide a modicum of continuity. Certainly not in plots or in architecture, but in the originality of his imagination and his style, lies Cabell's chief distinction as an artist.

Untermeyer has been most impressed by the poetic quality of Cabell's writing.² If his published poems are any indication, Cabell has never written good poetry, and we wonder how Mr. Untermeyer would undertake to show that the ability to write poor poems is likely to develop into the ability to write good prose. Certainly Cabell does not write poetic prose in the sense that Shelley and Francis Thompson wrote poetic prose. His prose is not pre-eminently imaginative prose, even when his subject matter is distinctly so. At its most effervescent we would prefer to call it eloquent, and eloquent with the eloquence of high-born heroes of romance. As for the verse intersprinkled in the text, it is sometimes clever and sometimes dull. Occasionally, as in *Jurgen*, page 97 (and this is pointed out by Untermeyer as a subject for future scholarly investigation) there are traces of poems that have been worked over into prose. And in *Figures of Earth* there is a kind of polyphonic prose turned into a parody, it would appear, on Browning, Swinburne, and Tennyson. But these are far from imparting a distinctive flavor to the whole concoction. Rather they are a few of the curious experiments in language which, however amusing and clever, seem like ragged edges on a beautiful fabric.

There has been admiration aplenty lavished upon Mr. Cabell. This "cool and discriminating irony", this "well-nigh impeccable workmanship", this architecture assuming "the solidity and shapeliness of a fugue",³ this artistry in which "every word

² This is the theme of his introduction to *Gallantry*.

³ The two quotations above are from Guy Holt's introduction to *Beyond Life*. This is from Untermeyer's introduction to *Gallantry*.

and sentence and passage stand subordinate to a carefully pre-conceived scheme that leaves no detail unattended and no ends hanging loose", in which "no structural or ornamental device known to the skilled craftsman is overlooked to procure the exact effect aimed at . . .", this style of "coruscating incisiveness", this cosmic undertaking of a universal biography that makes Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* seem "on the whole static and, one might say provincial"⁴—these all belong to the man who, according to the author of an introduction to *The Eagle's Shadow*, "is the only one of our living literary artists who has worked out something like a truly philosophic concept of human existence. One critic accords him the glory of "a meticulous perfection of phrasing"⁵; *The Nation* hails him as America's "master ironist";⁶ *The New Republic* proclaims *The Cream of the Jest* to show "a craftsmanship rarely equaled in American literature".⁷ Except for the violent critics who have been offended by the obscenity in Cabell, few have approached him with anything but rhapsodic admiration. Carl Van Doren praises his mastery of language, "which never falls below a high level of perfection".⁸ A style which has won acclaim so universal and so tumultuous, deserves analysis more penetrating than discriminate admiration.

There is no denying, on the whole, the pleasing effect of Cabell's facility. His style flows—and he has variety within the flow. Such is the smoothness of his rhythm that Van Doren says: "There are no angles in his surfaces. His style purrs to a degree that now and then begets monotony."⁹ And H. L. Mencken adds the supreme panegyric: the words of Cabell caress him like a Brahms symphony. Often Cabell is accused of gusto, but that is a quality far more of his imagination than of the language in which it is clothed. Even the

⁴ All of these from Edwin Bjorkman's introduction to *The Eagle's Shadow*.

⁵ Gunther, in Bookman 52: 200-206.

⁶ Nation 111: 343.

⁷ R. M. Lovett in New Republic, 26: 187.

⁸ *James Branch Cabell*, by Carl Van Doren. Page 5.

⁹ Irony in Velvet. Century 108: 561-6.

Avoid this
sort of thing.

experiments, imitations, parodies, and skits, have struck discordant notes for none of his votaries.

Perhaps no American writer has had a larger practical vocabulary than Cabell, or has been so sensitive to shades of meaning that are open to a man who has a taste for etymology and the tools for its study. He has excavated for his use valuable and quaint archaic terms. His knowledge of Latin and Greek is obvious from his employment of words retaining the primary force of their component parts. And yet his vocabulary is never technical. Van Doren remarks that Cabell writes for scholars and poets. But in fairness it should be added that Cabell can be enjoyed by a person of ordinary education and sophistication, whose nature does not compel him to analyse etymologies and subtleties.

In *Straws and Prayer Books* Cabell undertakes a criticism of the hardly-wrought style of George Moore, and after his usual fashion he emphasizes by imitation his criticism of Moore's paratactic structure, in that he strings over half a page a series of thoughts in independent clauses joined by interminable "and"s. Curiously enough, this manner of style which he derides he has made peculiarly his own. Again and again he uses the device for which he criticises Moore. As a matter of fact, if the critic investigates to find why the Latinity of Cabell does not produce the customary effect of stiffness and formalism, he may find the reason to lie, to a surprising extent, in the fluency and simplicity yielded by the humble Biblical "and".

By no strain, natural or supernatural, could Cabell's style be deduced from a conversational medium. The pomposity of the Latinity, commonly softened by the intermixture of humble English, but frequently left unadulterated, as in certain passages of eloquence in *Figures of Earth*, has been mixed with other materials, eased by fluent transitions, worked and molded by Cabell until the product has reached a state of integration and uniqueness ranking its creator as an important original stylist. One conspicuous service rendered by Cabell, we should point out, is that he refused to accept the current obsession that only words monosyllabic and of Anglo-Saxon origin belong properly

to a good style. He has taken the language of erudition and transformed it into a mode capable of much beauty, sometimes too eloquent and sometimes too artificial, but at the very least, ample-flowing, carefully wrought, and largely integrated.

If Stevenson learned to write by copying the masters, Cabell too has tried his hand at imitation; less, we suspect, for the practice in writing than for the sheer fun of burlesque and parody, or at times, in his criticism, for the sake of illustration. Trained eyes may find in *Beyond Life* echoes of Thackeray, and, in *Straws and Prayer Books*, of George Moore and Joseph Hergesheimer. In *Something About Eve* there are at least two pages in imitation of Rabelais. In *Figures of Earth* there are the Runes of the Blackbirds, parodies on Browning, Swinburne, Tennyson, and a polyphonic prosist, perhaps the late Amy Lowell.¹⁰ *Jurgen* yields an echo of the witch scene in Macbeth.¹¹ Anatole France and Maurice Hewlett have left their impress on the style of Cabell, and in *Jurgen* and *The Cream of the Jest* at least, there are indubitable traces of Henry James.¹²

The significance of the Henry James echoes begins to be clear. The style of James was, so far as structure goes, the last refinement of the academic—that is to say, it combined correctness with a finicky, involved, sometimes tentative and unnatural progression of thought, purely literary in form. Having already commented upon the Latinity of Cabell's vocabulary (turn a few pages and you come upon *pestiferous*, *horary*, *turgescible*, *capillary*, *mundivagant*, *tergiversation*, *avuncular*, *portentous*, all of which are likely to appeal to a youth completing his year with Virgil) we are prepared for the conclusion that Cabell's style is a perfected schoolmaster's English, elaborate, refined, experimental, tricky, ample-flowing, and scrupulously correct. It is true there are other elements: Cabell has an ear for musical rhythm, for simplicity and fluent transitions; but the basis of his style is academic.

¹⁰ *Figures of Earth*, 117-119.

¹¹ *Jurgen*, 61.

¹² *The Cream of the Jest*, 54, 68; *Jurgen*, 162; *Figures of Earth*, 114. Many other passages resemble the manner of James, though on the whole the resemblance to Moore is more common.

To reinforce this view there are certain practices of Cabell's which suggest the schoolmaster. There is, in the first place, his use of repetition for emphasis, unity, and symmetry. Those familiar with Cabell will remember such refrains as "... and yet the body of man is capable of much curious pleasure", "I shall follow after my own thinking and my own desires", "... able to wring only contempt and pity from his puppets ... since He had not endowed them with any faculties wherewith to comprehend their Creator's nature and intent", or "... it was never within Gerald's power to resist the beauty of a sublime thought when it was thus adequately expressed in flawless verse". Echoes and refrains run through every volume either because, being picturesque, they demand frames, or because they contain a central conception which is to be driven home. In the second place, Cabell is unquestionably erudite: he has tasted of the mythology of every land, he has a sense for languages, he makes use of incidents and devices from all literature ... e.g. the procession of the past in *Something About Eve* from the Greek pastoral; the comedy of The Holy Nose of Lytreia in the same volume from Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*; the accumulation of irrelevant idioms in *Something About Eve*¹³ from Rabelais; phrases from Shelley, as in *Jurgen*, page 270; parodies of Browning, Swinburne, and Tennyson in *Figures of Earth*; echoes of Thackeray, Hewlett, Moore, and Henry James; the phrase "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion" from Dowson's poem, appearing with slight modifications in *Domnei*;¹⁴ the idea of a descent to Hell in *Jurgen*; classical tropes, as aposiopesis, named and illustrated, as in *Cords of Vanity*, page 307; and innumerable other effects. In the third place, Cabell harbors a feeling of immense superiority over his readers and he frequently labors a point, as Matthew Arnold does a phrase or as a schoolmaster does a thought, to make sure that his readers understand. Such a schoolmaster's condescension we find frequently. Consider his over-explanations, as where he explains solemnly that Felix means "happy"; and

¹³ Pages 81 and 134.

¹⁴ Pages 133 and 163.

his over-explicitness, as where he gives a character a stupid remark with the legend "came the *judicious* comment", and as where he describes Jurgen bowing as gracefully as possible while sitting in bed, and adds, "It is not easy to bow gracefully while sitting erect in bed"; and the occasional ineptness and over-obviousness of his illustrations as in *The Cream of the Jest* where, describing a conference of Great Personages and desiring to make them as stupid as possible, he does so by putting ancient, comic-strip chestnuts into their mouths. Consider the intellectual snobbery in his references to the riff-raff, to those who failed to appreciate the artistry of his earlier work; to those who, like Upton Sinclair, are earnestly concerned with men and the inadequacy of institutions to afford them an ample life, and probably to those whose knowledge of Latin and Greek roots is not so extensive as his own, and certainly to all those whom he has taken in with his tricks. Consider his pedantry, as in his use of Adès instead of the common Hades and in the speeches of Evaine the Fox-Spirit.¹⁵ Consider his specious and shallow summaries of the opposition, such as his frequent dicta about realism—e.g. *The Cream of the Jest*, 61 . . . and his scorn directed toward those who have not what he recognizes as ideas (which are in reality more of the nature of day-dreams). And finally, let us note that the attitude of Cabell toward things is that of the dilettante or the professor. He plays with ideas, never seeing their connection with action. He is unable commonly to make up his mind; that about which he is sentimental now may soon be the object of his sophisticated laughter or contempt. He is intrigued by words; he is a trifler and will not come in from play.

Van Doren's description of the Cabellian style is misleading. It does not purr; however academic it may be, it is varied in mood and flow. If you except something of bumpiness and the labored breathing that come of vocabulary exercises, you are again misled, for the ingredients have been put together with a magic touch, so that evenness and flexibility are the result. The movement of his style may be a stately march of eloquence, or a tripping measure, or a leisurely ambling gait; what is com-

¹⁵ *Something About Eve*, 129-139.

mon at all times is, that it never grows nervous or excited. It teases you and lulls you; it tantalizes you at times with the tricky suspense of complicated Henry Jamesian periodic sentences, with modifying phrases staving off your curiosity until the author is fully ready to divulge and go on with his thoughts. On the whole, in spite of its by-plays and eccentricities, it gives you the impression of being the most satisfying original style evolved by an American writer.

Yet there are serious criticisms to be made against the Cabellian style. Cabell has experimented in style often, but he has not always ironed away the roughness of the experiment. Lacking the plentiful and abundant grace of a conversational style, he has resorted to unusual or archaic terms, the frills and fripperies of language. He works, we are told, with a dictionary at his elbow, and the result is sometimes a splurge of words. We find, for example, in a single sentence the two abominations of decent, direct English: the words *tonsorial* and *sartorial*.¹⁶ When sleeplessness becomes "Morphean parsimony", when the comparison of a man to a frog becomes a "batrachian simile", we suspect that there is a limit to a dictionary's usefulness. Charteris is described in *The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck* as a "baby with a vocabulary" and the description is variously justified in *Beyond Life*, in which Cabell speaks through Charteris—e. g. in the use of *co-etaneously* for contemporaneously, *veracity* for truth, and in such words or phrases as *necromancy*, *chirographic*, *atrabilious*, *contemner*, *multitudinous*, *unsalutary*, all of which and many others are good English words in themselves but which in the aggregate are unhealthy. There are passages in which it seems to be a rule that no simple word be used if a longer substitute might be employed. In a few instances such usage approaches imminently upon comic-strip humor; in others, it approaches jargon, as in ". . . and he had . . . thick hair, sleeked down, and parted 'on the sides' with some fanfaronade in the way of capillary flourishes";¹⁷ and again it appears as a perversity of academic English, as anything but the English of the one who speaks the language for the sake of expressing an idea.

And in the larger things the Cabellian style often falls far short of perfection. At times it employs the device of allitera-

¹⁶ *Figures of Earth*, 27.

¹⁷ *Straws and Prayer-Books*, 285.

tion. At times it out-Jameses James to the point of meandering crazily, as it does in *Jurgen*, page 162. Sometimes the sentence grows tumid with words, as—" . . . each in his station thinking not at all of the garden ever any more".¹⁸ Sometimes it skips badly, as in: " . . . the very dissimilar household economy practised by a King. . . ". And again, Cabell sometimes affects an illogical division of quotations, after a fashion followed with a dash of cleverness by writers in popular magazines, as in *Something about Eve*, page 108: "'I', Gerard said, 'have not forgotten.'" ¹⁹ Then there are pure displays of pedantry, usually slow moving and dull, amateurish in tone. Occasionally Cabell interrupts himself to tell a very, very old joke,²⁰ or to devise a pun (the puns, besides being extraneous, are generally bad).²¹ Besides, there are interruptions in which the author divests himself of antipathies and cuts out the ground from any possible attack by denying his own seriousness, and these interruptions are seldom written with the niceness that characterizes Cabell at his best. Even the best of the biographies is marred by this raggedness.

Few writers have started with Cabell's equipment: an alert, critical mind; the habit of conscientious study; an epigrammatic turn (witness how nicely he hits off the Pilgrims, in *Straw and Prayer Books*, 142: "We [Southerners] have never, for that matter, learned to think of the Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants as belonging, exactly, to the gentry"); an extensive education with a background in the classics and in languages and in the mythology of all nations; a knowledge of history and of literature; a strikingly big vocabulary; and a genius for experiment in style. A manner of employing his erudition in the telling of his tales has at times been offensive, but generally speaking, except for a sporadic outburst of intentional mystification, he is comprehensible and his style is varied and pleasing. We have mentioned before his ability to weld the Latin element with the simpler elements of his phraseology until he evolved a medium capable of eloquence, of the courteous speech of the romance, and of the simplest utterance of a peas-

¹⁸ *Jurgen*, 20. ¹⁹ *Something About Eve*, 109. ²⁰ As in *Jurgen*, 256.

²¹ See *The Cream of the Jest*, 178; *Jurgen*, 90; *Jurgen*, 38; *Jurgen*, 161.

ant. But there have always been ragged edges. Cabell has related few stories without pausing to play with an idea or experiment with a style, and so he has failed in the effect of unity. He has been blind to criticism, and so the welding of elements in his unique style has been incomplete.

His last novel is not encouraging. In substance it resembles both *Jurgen* and *Figures of Earth*. But *Something About Eve* is less original and less spontaneous, and it is more broken by sallies at American standards of tastes and morals, and by imitations and jokes and puns and plays on words and satiric skits. Its theme is more obvious and its development more obscene. In it the Cabell imagination has been far from doing itself justice. It says less and resorts more to trick-writing than any other book by Cabell. It is almost a denial of his promise—his abnegation of greatness—for instead of refining and polishing his style, smoothing the experiments gracefully off into the main theme and the dominant tone, making his style more flexible and more beautiful, he has taken the easier path and devoted himself to artifice. Perhaps he has never been serious enough about any work to feel the need of that concentration which demands a unity of purpose and a subordination of means.

James Branch Cabell is still young. Though highly original, his art is far from that state of perfection described rhapsodically by his critics. If he continues in the direction indicated by *Something About Eve* he will eventually come to be regarded as a clever craftsman, and his works as curiosities. There is still a chance that he may settle his antipathies and put aside his flare for experiment long enough to write a novel the most gifted and, in style, the most original and finely wrought that any American has given us.

EDWARD NILES HOOKER.

Holland, Michigan.

All Cabell works used for consultation were in the Kalki Edition except the following:

The Soul of Melicent. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1913.

The Cream of the Jest. The Modern Library, 1927.

Beyond Life. The Modern Library.

Figures of Earth. Illustrated by Frank Pape. Robert M. McBride and Company, New York, 1925.

THE HUMANISM OF JOSEPH CONRAD

Joseph Conrad, now that he is dead, is being made popular as well as famous. The American art of advertising, having been called upon, has responded in terms of which the following choice question is a sufficient indication: "Who can resist tales that pick you up and throw you bodily into strange surroundings, tales of love as deep as the sea itself, tales of gripping adventure; a ferocious combat, a struggle for existence, a midnight explosion on a desolate harbor, a millionaire's yacht anchored on a remote inlet while the natives are sharpening their barongs for a massacre?" We can imagine what kind of reader would respond to such allurements, and what sort of books he would expect to get for his money. And we can also wonder what state of mind that native soul would be in, expecting something similar to *Treasure Island* or *The Sea Wolf*, and beginning *The Rescue* in innocent anticipation of hearing all about those barongs!

But we do not take "blurbs" too seriously. When critics foster an inaccuracy, the case is altered. The blurb advertises Conrad as a popular romancer; the critics praise him as a literary romancer. The distinction is one of degree not of kind. Mr. Joseph Curle strikes the usual note when he says flatly: "Conrad is the most romantic of writers."

Now I admit that in Conrad you find both melodrama and glamor; but my opinion is that if he possessed nothing else he would not be entitled to the very high rank he is beginning to hold in our literary history. My opinion is that he possesses something else—a view of life, an attitude toward men and women; and that furthermore this attitude sets him less in the tradition of *The Ancient Mariner* or *Moby Dick* than in that of Homer, of *Ædipus* and *King Lear*. I hold, in other words, that fundamentally, Conrad's art, at its best is less romantic than classic.

I

Now I do not use those much-abused words in any narrow and arbitrary sense. I consider that they represent alternative

attitudes toward life and conduct, alternatives between which not only writers but every person who has any spiritual energy at all, must choose. They represent opposite tendencies. Classicism, or humanism, toward control, normality, and unification of experience. Romance seeks unlimited expression, strangeness, multiplicity. The one is centripetal; the other centrifugal. The former runs the danger of being mediocre, but aims at the golden mean. The latter, on the other hand, runs the danger of flying off into the lunatic fringe, where so many modern artists have obviously landed. At its best, however, romance adds to beauty strangeness as in Coleridge, or mysticism as in Blake or sensuousness as in Keats, depicting in beautiful symbols the less frequented ways of the spirit. Humanism, on the contrary, lays claim to its title because it seeks what is peculiarly human—that is, ethical, rational, controlled—in contrast to those irrational and instinctive qualities which man shares with the brute or with nature.

Now it should not occasion surprise when I say that in Conrad there is both. There have been few or no great artists in whom there has not been something of both. Shakespeare is outwardly romantic; at bottom he is ethical and controlled. So I believe is Conrad at his best. This article is an attempt to distinguish between these opposing tendencies in him. I begin with what is, or is taken to be, romantic.

In the first place Conrad's practical necessity, as we know from letters published, was to make money by his pen. He sought to do so by making the stories popular in the same way and for probably the same reason as did Shakespeare. Both built works of beauty on a foundation of melodrama. For nine-tenths of the average audience *Hamlet* is nothing but melodrama—ghosts, revenges, plottings, madness and sudden death. It is none the less a tragedy to the discerning. And the bare plots of such novels of Conrad as *The Rescue*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *Victory*, not to mention stories like *Falk* or *Heart of Darkness*, are, except for the "unhappy" ending, perfectly adaptable to the screen. And the screen, of course, by the very fact that it omits the artistic significance of a work, demonstrates the

amount of melodrama in it. This use of melodrama has been made a reproach to Conrad; a critic as sympathetic as Abel Chevalley "regrets" he has felt obliged to mix so much of the feuilleton in his novels."

Nevertheless, despite our blurb's implications, Conrad was never as wholehearted about his sensationalism as Shakespeare was, and as a consequence never has been genuinely popular, as Shakespeare has been. Shakespeare wrote immortal plays without, so far as we can see, having been troubled by an artistic conscience. Conrad was. His ironic sense of truth, his dislike of emotional excess, never permitted him to follow the broad road to best-sellerdom. His endings, for example, as I have suggested, are never the facile and conventional ones; and he could very forcefully express his distaste for such expedients. The letter has already been widely quoted in which he comments on the rejection of *Freyra of Seven Isles* by a certain editor. "As for faking a 'sunny' ending to my story, I would see all the American Magazines and all the American Editors damned in heaps before lifting my pen for that task. I have never been particularly anxious to rub shoulders with the piffle they print with touching consistency from year's end to year's end."

His tales oftener end sadly than not; but what is more to the point, he frequently goes deliberately about to avoid mere sensation in the interest of deeper significance. In *Falk*, for instance, we have the sufficiently sensational fact that the hero once ate human flesh. Imagine the conventional, Poesque treatment of the theme. Conrad puts the incident far back in the past, and centers our attention on how it affected Falk's character. What might have been mere melodrama is transformed into a pitifully ironic study, emotionally near to tragedy.

I admit, then, that much in the plots of Conrad's novels is crudely romantic, if considered alone. But one cannot justly consider it alone, any more than one can consider alone the bare plot of *Hamlet*, or even of that classic masterpiece which Aristotle took as his model, *Ædipus the King*.

Secondly, Conrad's involved and retrospective method of narration, so often criticized, at times so tantalizing, akin as it

is to the methods of some romanticists, proves when closely examined to be an effort in the opposite direction. This method is too familiar to need extended explanation. Ford Madox Ford, in his *Personal Recollection*, amusingly gives us his understanding of it as it was worked out by the two together during their collaboration. As he puts it: "We saw that life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains. We in turn, as we wished to produce on you an effect of life, must not narrate but render impressions." One must not generalize about a character or event; one must present a mass of data just as it might come to one in life, and let the reader do the generalizing. But such a method handicaps a writer when he wants to make clear the significance of his material. Conrad as a result had recourse to long retrospective and explanatory narrations which at any moment would interrupt the flow of the story. He also made use of a personal narrator, from the belief that the device enhances verisimilitude, and from the need of having some *alter ego* to philosophize occasionally about the goings-on. Thus we were given Marlow, that extraordinary ancient mariner, who must indeed have held his audience with a glittering eye to have kept them silent through the expanses of his discourse. In all this I see the French influence Mr. Ford emphasizes less clearly than I do that of Henry James, Conrad's friend and "cher maître". Incidentally it is amusing to note James, as quoted by Mr. Walpole, remarking of our author's method that "it places Mr. Conrad absolutely alone as votary of the way to do a thing that shall make it undergo most doing." This from the author of such works as *What Maisie Knew*!

At all events, this impressionistic technic, in spite of its toil after actuality and its timidity with the frank conventions of traditional fiction, too often becomes itself a labored and improbable convention, as we know to our regret in *Lord Jim* and *Chance*. It might indeed be argued that Conrad would have done better with a more forthright method of story-telling. But that is neither here nor there so far as we are concerned. The point for us is that what is sometimes taken in Conrad for perverse artifice is actually a consequence of a passion for telling

the exact truth. An acute critic has said that Conrad had greater respect for realism of human emotions than earlier English novelists like Meredith and Hardy. This view would seem to be borne out by what Conrad himself has to say regarding the use of the imagination: "Well, that imagination . . . should be used to create human souls: to disclose human hearts, —and not to create events that are properly speaking *accidents* only. To accomplish it you must cultivate your poetic faculty —you must give yourself up to emotions (no easy task). You must squeeze out of yourself every sensation, every thought, every image—mercilessly, without reserve as without remorse: you must search the darkest corners of your heart, the most inner recesses of your brain—you must search them for the image, for the glamour, for the right expression. And you must do it sincerely, at any cost. You must do it so that at the end of your day's work you should feel exhausted, emptied of every sensation and every thought, with a blank mind and an aching heart, with the notion that there is nothing—nothing left in you."

In search after truth the rule of moderation, for Conrad as well as for philosophy, obviously did not hold! Grant that he adopted a current romantic technic. One must deny that the burning passion for sincerity that lay behind his adoption is something peculiar to romanticism.

Thirdly, let us consider those "strange surroundings" spoken of in the advertisement. Surely, says the average reader, a story laid in the South Seas is *per se* romantic! There is a hoary tradition to that effect, founded on obvious causes. Nevertheless the matter is not so simple. Conrad happens actually to have lived some of his most impressionable years in the South Seas, and to tell of what he has actually seen. He has not been, so far as I am aware, criticized for inaccuracy in these settings. Nay, more, it is remarkable in reading his life and letters to discover what large chunks of his own actual past experience he transported bodily into his stories.

Indeed, several critics, considering these things, have labelled him "romantic realist" or "realistic romancer". The terms

are well enough so far as they go. Realism, meaning an effort to describe things accurately, in spite of a common notion to the contrary, is not incompatible with romance. In fact, it is extremely useful to romance: it makes the improbable seem plausible. Thus realism, as a method, is used by Balzac and Hugo, by Poe and Dickens and Stevenson, and almost every great romantic writer. The romantic furthermore tends toward realism because of his interest in the variety of things. Realism as a method, however, is not opposed to humanism. The classic artist, it is true, is less likely than the romantic to delight in details, but when he uses them he does so with equal desire for accuracy. And realism as a method Conrad obviously used, and naturally: to be accurate was a necessary part of his impressionistic technic, and an essential of his artistic faith.

Realism, however, sometimes means not a method but an attitude—the cold scientific observation of fact, the avoidance of any kind of idealization. In this sense Conrad was no realist. His criticisms of Arnold Bennett make this obvious. "I would quarrel not with the truth of your conception but with the realism thereof. You stop just short of being absolutely real because you are faithful to your dogmas of realism. Now realism in art will never approach reality. And your art, your gift, should be put to the service of a larger and freer faith." Whether for Conrad himself this "faith" was a romantic one is the real question before us. His realistic use of details of the South Sea islands!—has little bearing on our problem.

II

If, then, one looks for something essentially romantic in Conrad, he will not find it in Conrad's occasional use of startling incident or exotic setting. These things are more accidental, superficial, than innate qualities of the author. But there is undoubtedly something else to be found. That is glamor—the glamor which Conrad throws over any setting, exotic or not, which touches his imagination. This is the one important romantic quality which I find in him. Let us consider its nature and its bearing on our problem.

Now romantic literature shows notable manifestations of a mental disturbance with characteristics similar to homesickness.

Adolescents usually feel a disturbance similar to it, which the disillusioned adult world calls "growing pains". Some people never grow out of it: and in them it is often considered a mark of distinction, as being the outward and visible sign of artistic grace, a longing for the ideal, the bearing of the banner with the strange device, so to speak, into the Alpine heights. Some long hopefully for their ideal; some become disillusioned and hopeless. Criticism calls the longing romantic nostalgia.

Now there is no one, romantic or otherwise, but yearns for something. What distinguishes romantic nostalgia both in life and in literature is its extreme subjectivity. The longing may attach itself for a time to some object outside the individual, just as the adolescent thinks himself in love with the nearest girl: but it is essentially the result of auto-suggestion, and is hence changeable and restless. It is a prolongation into the maturity of "wishful thinking" of childhood; it is the result of the imagination working to appease the instincts without the discipline of reality.

Shelley is perhaps the supreme example in English literature, and may well be contrasted with another poet usually considered romantic—Burns. Shelley's desire was that "of the moth for the star, of the dawn for the morrow"; he imagined himself into love with Harriet or Mary or Emilia. Burns wanted not so much ideal love as particular women. The results in both cases were unfortunate; but the point is that relatively Shelley's love affairs were far more than those of Burns the temporary "fixations" of subjective imaginings. And since no actual woman could measure up to the dream of a romantic genius, disillusionment inevitably followed.

Shelley never became permanently disillusioned; his dream-world, in other words, never became adapted to reality; he never "grew up". But other less sanguine romantics become permanently disillusioned without losing their nostalgia. In their work the longing, since it can find no satisfactory object in life, finds in it consciously fabricated dreams, or manifests itself merely in a suffused emotional tone. It is in this last way that romantic nostalgia manifests itself in Conrad.

Now considering the facts of Conrad's life we would *a priori* expect something of the kind. When a mere infant he was exiled to Russian prison camps with his parents, and was witness to the mortal illness that followed upon his mother's privations. During his formative years he was witness to his father's death in sorrow and loneliness. As a youth he was imbued with the proud but hopeless traditions of a patrician family and a conquered race; he became the passionate lover of home and country, and found himself deprived of both. Under the circumstances we cannot wonder at the nervous anxiety and restlessness of his temperament, even in his middle age. Nor is it so extraordinary that as a youth he felt an irresistible impulsion to wander, and that he became a sailor under the flag of England. What he could not find in Poland he was impelled to seek elsewhere. Hatred of Russia, generalized in his large spirit to hatred of all oppression and injustice, was balanced by the love for freedom and justice, and he idealized England into the symbol for these. And his need for fellowship and solidarity, denied in Poland, was partially met by the fellowship of the sea, the necessary result of the sailor's human isolation and enforced coöperative toil.

But though Conrad was impelled by a spiritual homesickness to wander, it is obvious that his sickness was never wholly cured either by the sea or by life in England. The result is a nostalgic tone manifested in all his writing. Like the music of that other Polish genius, Chopin, Conrad's style was always not a little brooding, melancholy, and yearning. Typically the yearning of his middle age, when he is writing, had through disillusionment become generalized to regret for the transiency of beauty. Thus comes his desire "to snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush of time, a passing phase of life"; "to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood"; and to disclose "the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment". Passion was for him recollected not in tranquility but with regret and yearning, because all things, whether beautiful or terrible, are transient. His art

was thus a means of remoulding the universe nearer to the heart's desire.

His nostalgia is manifested not only in his fondness for memories but in the details of his style. Thus we find in his sentences the tendency to "looseness", to trailing off. There is considerable evidence that he thought most readily in French and that he was greatly influenced by Flaubert and de Maupassant. Certainly he often uses triads of adjectives, following the words they modify as in French, which close the sentence with a dying fall. "The land and the water slept invisible, unstirring, and mute." "The weary succession of nights and days tainted by the obstinate clamour of sages, demanding bliss and an empty heaven, is redeemed at last by the vast silence of pain and labour, by the dumb fear and the dumb courage of men obscure, forgetful, and enduring." Or, of a ship, ". . . again, for long hours she remained lost in a vast universe of night and silence where gentle sighs wandering here and there like forlorn souls, made the still sails flutter as in sudden fear, and the ripple of a beshrouded ocean whisper its compassion afar—in a voice mournful, immense and faint."

He often uses parallel series of words or phrases not for logical clarity but for the effect of suggestiveness, uncertainty, elusiveness. "She lived like the tall palms among whom she was passing now, seeking the light, desiring the sunshine, fearing the storm, unconscious of either. The slave had no hope, and knew of no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love, no fear except of a blow, and no vivid feeling but that of occasional hunger. . ."

Again consider his use of metaphor and simile for suggestiveness—"She dipped into the hollow straight down, as if going over the edge of the world." "In the perfect calm before the coming of the afternoon breeze the irregularly jagged line of tree-tops stood unchanging, as if traced by an unsteady hand on the clear blue of the hot sky."

The reader will have felt the rhythmic effects of these passages, effects that, according to Ford, Conrad labored upon

unceasingly. This rhythm undoubtedly re-enforces the mood. But above all we must note his fondness for words denoting unlimited space and time, connoting wonder, mystery, and nostalgia. This, in spite of his complaints concerning the indefiniteness of English words contrasted with French, and his almost Flaubertian toil after the *mot juste*. The explanation of the apparent contradiction lies in that his anxiety was for fidelity to a mood, and that to convey a mood a writer must use words poetically, for their suggestiveness. "... The sea that stretching away on all sides merged into the illimitable silence of all creation." "And the immortal sea stretched away, immense and hazy, like the image of life, with a glittering surface and lightless depths." "... The ship, a fragment detached from the earth, went on lonely and swift like a small planet. Round her the abysses of sky and sea met in an unattainable frontier. A great circular solitude moved with her, ever changing and ever the same." "In the magnificence of the phantom rays the ship appeared pure like a vision of ideal beauty, illusive like a tender dream of serene peace. And nothing in her was real, nothing was distinct and solid but the heavy shadows that filled her decks with their unceasing and noiseless stir: the shadows darker than the night and more restless than the thoughts of men."

In short we find Conrad genuinely romantic not so much in plot or setting as in his habitual mood of brooding and melancholy reflection whereby he suffuses over all his action an uncertain, magic, and crepuscular light — the glamor of his nostalgic imagination. This glamor exercises its charm at all times with a potency hardly less than that of *The Ancient Mariner*. I do not wish to minimize its importance, but when all is said — and much more and much better might be said — in its praise, not all is said in praise of Conrad. In the very passages selected to illustrate his glamor and nostalgia we note something else: "immense and hazy, like the image of life"; "more restless than the thoughts of men". These words are not the expression of mere feeling and mood; these are the outcome of thought and the evidence of philosophy. Moreover, the same facts offered to suggest the cause of his nostalgia may be used to prove it more than mere emotional vagabondage.

III

The point is that Conrad's nostalgia was vague and his spirit restless for genuine cause. We have recognized in him the signs of subjective yearning; we must recognize also that he had a good objective. Thus the distinction between romantic and true nostalgia. As Professor Babbitt remarks, "romantic nostalgia is not 'homesickness', accurately speaking, but desire to get away from home", and "Odysseus in Homer suffers from true nostalgia. The Ulysses of Tennyson, on the other hand, is nostalgic in the romantic sense when he leaves home 'to sail beyond the sunset'." So of Conrad we may say that if his nostalgia, as manifested in his writing, seems to be without definite object, he had in literal fact no home to be sick for. And of Conrad we may go further, I believe, and say that throughout his life he was seeking, often in toil and anguish, a substitute for the home he had lost. His nostalgia proves that he never wholly found it in the brotherhood of seamen, as he declares in the Preface to *A Personal Record*. He found something, apparently, in living in England, his ideal land of liberty. He must have found something in marriage, and in the friendship of men of literary imagination and warm hearts. And he seems to have found most in a view of life, expressed through his books.

He does not seem to have come by this view of life easily and happily. Modern knowledge makes the path to a rational spiritual home very difficult indeed. Faced with the disillusionments of science, the poets—among whom I emphatically include Conrad—can no longer seek consolation with Nature under the delusion that she "never did betray the soul that loved her". To the children of scientific light the eternal dance of electrons, intellectually interesting as it is, cannot be a human thing nor satisfy the human need for spiritual union with something beyond ourselves. Much as Conrad admired the beauty and might of nature, he never, like Wordsworth, deluded himself that nature was worshipful. Nor did Conrad ever find consolation in a supernatural religion.

Disillusioned Conrad was, as is startlingly manifested in the melancholy, sometimes bitter, confessions poured out in his letters to friends. But it is significant that he was not a pessimist. He did not, like Hardy in *Tess* or *Jude*, go to the opposite extreme from Wordsworth and regard nature as altogether malign. Rather, in his search for a home he turned away from nature altogether, and turned to man. He seems to have been driven by despair of all else to a new humanism, to a revival of interest in mankind not as part of nature—the scientific view—but as separate from and in a way antagonistic to nature. Having like Bertrand Russell cast off all anthropomorphic illusions about the world and adopted the "free man's worship", he sought the solidarity of mankind; isolated from the unregarding flux of the universal machine of which he himself in body was a part, he sought in men and women the consolations of purpose, of justice, of love and fidelity. He knew well that little enough of these human ultimates could he find even in men and women, but except for the groping virtues of some animals like the dog they exist nowhere else. These rare but necessary humanities are found for individuals now and again in personal relationships; but they can be preserved for all mankind only in that vehicle for communicating our subtlest experience which we call poetry. And Conrad embodied them in his romances. In his writing, then, nature affects man, forms a setting for him, but is never confused with him; it has no human qualities, either good or evil. Its blind activities sometimes collide with human will, but it is human will which in Conrad is significant. In *Typhoon*, for example, the real significance of the narrative lies in the power of a naïve Scot through sheer obstinacy to conquer inanimate nature in one of its most terrific aspects. As in *Typhoon*, this natural setting is often grand indeed, but Conrad has no anthropomorphic illusions about it; at most he allows himself the rhetorical resource of personification, but only as a figure of speech. In that beautiful series of prose poems, *The Mirror of the Sea*, there is, for example, a magnificent passage which might be called Conrad's Ode to the West Wind. But while Shelley wanted to identify

himself with the restlessness of nature, Conrad remains consistently aloof; in the passage there is simply a fine use of rhetoric to suggest something of the awfulness of mighty forces.

Conrad, then, does not "mix himself up with the landscape" after the fashion of the nature-loving romantic; his concern is with man. He sees man alone against a mysterious and insentient background, overarched by indifferent stars, blown upon by moving but unliving winds; but willing, acting, and for a time subduing the forces about him, to his own ends. When so viewed, man cannot but take on some of the attributes of heroism; not the tawdry heroics of melodrama, but heroism in the great tragic tradition. Conrad of course does not over-rate capacity; if man, as he sees him, is at times heroic, he is also sometimes despicable and, ultimately, futile. Life to Conrad, indeed, is enfolded in mystery, compounded of illusion, rounded by a sleep. Yet though he sees its ultimate futility, he admires the struggle; he mediates between philosophic pessimism and an unthinking optimism. Hence comes his detachment, his irony.

Now there are different kinds of irony. There is the still Sophoclean irony of contrast between what is representatively human in aspiration and hope, and the irrationality of human fate. And there is the restless romantic irony of contrast between moods, which results from a temperament centered in nothing outside itself and hence subject to the change. In a Lord Byron, a James Branch Cabell, this romantic irony results from the discovery that romantic ideals are vain, and is the recoil resulting from an objective world breaking in upon a subjective dream. Mr. Cabell knows that his visions have no objective existence, but for fear of ridicule from an unromantic world he dares not weep; rather he pokes fun at the dreams he still loves but cannot credit. Thus he gives us, as has been remarked, warm baths of sentiment alternating with cold douches of irony.

Now Conrad's irony is not of this latter sort, for it is disciplined to reality and freed from the tyranny of mood. It is notable for its restraint and calm; at most it is only tinged with

bitterness, never steeped in gall like that of Hardy. "From laughter and tears", he writes in a memorable passage, "the descent is easy to snivelling and giggles." And in another connection he says: "One thing that I am certain of is that I have approached the object of my task, things human, in a spirit of piety. The earth is a temple where there is going on a mystery play, childish and poignant, ridiculous and awful enough, in all conscience. Once in, I've tried to behave decently. I have not degraded any quasi-religious sentiment by tears and groans; and if I have been amused or indignant, I've neither grinned nor gnashed my teeth. In other words, I've tried to write with dignity, not out of regard for myself, but for the sake of the spectacle, the play with an obscure beginning and an unfathomable dénouement."

This passage gives us the point of view—that of the spectator, not ideal but concerned only as one can be in matters of life and death; not swayed by moods, but self-contained. Thus it is that Conrad's irony, unromantic because of its disciplined detachment from mood and attachment to reality, is made human by pity. So ruthless and sordid a story as *The Secret Agent*, for example, would be unendurable if the irony of its author were not throughout tempered and subdued by his pity for all things pitiful, his grave indignation at all things detestable. True pity, as Conrad exemplifies it, is the human aspect of justice; it is to be sharply distinguished from that sentimentalism that is the result of unregulated feeling. It is the chief constituent of that "spirit of piety" in which Conrad approached his work.

Now irony of this kind, touched with pity, if pressed in one direction, becomes humor; if pressed in the other, merges into tragedy. Conrad is seldom humorous, but sometimes at his best he achieves the effect of great tragedy. His human figures, isolated from nature as they are, sometimes are nobly and grandly heroic.

His protagonists, as has frequently been pointed out, are often extremists in their fidelity to some cause or ideal, almost to the extent of being driven by an *idée fixe*. This fact has been made ground for considering him, especially in his Russian

novel, *Under Western Eyes*, influenced by Dostoievski. This view I believe mistaken. Incidentally we may mention that Conrad himself vehemently denied the influence. Above all, we must reiterate that Conrad's own point of view, in contrast to that of some of his characters, and in contrast to that of the great epileptic romancer, is always controlled and normal. There is no extravagant "Slavic" mysticism about his treatment of human nature; he indulges in no romantic overturnings of normal ethical experience, as does Dostoievski when, for example, the latter makes his murderer-hero find salvation through the spiritual influence of a prostitute.

That Conrad's heroes are often distinguished by more than ordinary fidelity to an ideal makes for elevation rather than for romantic strangeness. These are typically simple men; and the ideals they pursue are usually recognized by all mankind. In view of these facts I find Conrad indeed akin to the writers of the classic traditions, for whom the tragic hero must be in elevation of character above the commonplace though in quality of character not beyond the normal.

Again it has been pointed out that his heroes are almost always made to face the difficulties which they by nature are least able to overcome. "In almost every case", says Hugh Walpole, "his subjects are concerned with unequal combats—unequal to his own far-seeing vision, but never to the human souls engaged in them, and it is the consciousness of the blindness that renders men's honesty and heroism of so little account that gives occasion for his irony." Hence Mr. Walpole concludes that Conrad's "harshes limitation" is that he can "never be free from this certain obsession of the vanity of human struggle." His best as well as his worst characters meet defeat: Lord Jim, Captain Walley, Lingard, Razimov, and the rest. Thus, for Mr. Walpole, Conrad is a pessimist, and there is no mitigation for the calamities that ends his greater works. If this view be true, we cannot consider these works true tragedies. For of tragedy we say that pity and fear are purged, not merely aroused; that a physical defeat is offset by a spiritual victory. We can, I think, say this even

of so dark a tragedy as *King Lear*, for by the very death of Cordelia the beauty of her life is made brighter to the world. The mitigation of defeat arises from the spectator's sense that in spite of death human values have been vindicated. It is the lack of this sense often in Hardy's novels, I submit, that makes them less tragic than merely mortuary. It is otherwise with Conrad.

To some of his tales, of course, he gives endings which are not tragic at all; and to some, endings which are calamitous only. I cannot feel that the sordid horrors of *The Secret Agent* rise to tragedy, or even the utter misfortunes of *Freya*. Exceptions being granted, however, it is surprising how much of tragic elevation there is to be found even in those novels which do not end in death.

It may be said, for example, of *Nostromo* that tremendous as it is, its title character is hardly a genuine hero, and his death at the end does not yield awe and admiration. But one may reply that nonetheless there is tragedy in the novel, and that it is personified in Mrs. Gould. She does not die, but the spiritual loss she sustains through the influence of the silver mine is far more moving than Nostromo's melodramatic demise. And again, *The Rescue* ends without physical misfortune to the principal characters, yet it very powerfully conveys through Lingard the grandeur of a struggle between irreconcilable spiritual demands—on the one hand the claims of his own race and of love; on the other, those of fidelity to sworn friendship and a romantic quest. This novel disappoints or annoys many readers, yet after long acquaintance I can myself confess increasing admiration for the artistry of its ethical theme.

We must indeed disagree with Mr. Walpole and accept rather the dictum of another critic that Conrad is a pessimist about the universe but an optimist about human individuals. The romance called *Victory*, as Mr. Follett notes, is a case in point. Superficial readers have been at a loss to justify the title of that unhappy story. They have failed to observe that the "victory" is that of the girl Lena, and is achieved by death. It is only by losing her life that she wins the skeptic Heyst to

surrender to the laws of life. In spite of considerable melodrama the underlying theme here is the classic tradition. Mr. Walpole mentions *The End of the Tether* as though the death of Captain Walley were unmitigated loss. Yet what would seem obvious about his suicide is its self-sacrificing heroism. At the end of his tether, he has but one way to preserve his daughter's insurance money. He dies, but with our admiration and honor. The case of *Lord Jim* is less clear. However quixotic and cruel to the woman who loves him, Jim does the one thing that can prove his mastery over the cowardice he dreads; yet the fact that we, as readers, do not feel his death to be altogether necessary, makes the ending not wholly tragic. Indeed, as Conrad carefully reminds us, Jim was "incurably romantic", and in dying made a last romantic gesture.

Conrad wrote in a romantic tradition, and the tendency in the other direction which I have been observing never found perfect fruition. Yet it is, I believe, fundamental enough to justify my view that the casual classification of Conrad with romance is superficial, and that higher honors are due him for his ability to rise at times to the austere heights of tragedy. For if he was nostalgic, it was for a spiritual home; and what sets him above the vast majority of creative writers of to-day is that at times he found this home in the best of human nature. Beside his ironic and pitiful yet admiring view of life, the pessimism of naturalistic fiction seems stupid. It was no mere romancer who could write: "At last the presented vision of regret or pity, of terror or mirth, shall awaken in the hearts of the beholders that feeling of unavoidable solidarity; in mysterious origin, in toil, in joy, in hope, in uncertain fate, which binds men to each other and all mankind to the visible world." And after he had known the worst of human fate, it was with an unshaken faith in mankind that he could assert: "When the last aqueduct shall have crumbled to pieces, the last airship fallen to the ground, the last blade of grass have died upon a dying earth, man indomitable by his training in resistance to misery and pain, shall set this undiminished light of his eyes against the feeble glow of the sun."

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON.

University of California.

WILLA CATHER

To Miss Cather's novels has come gradually the distinction to serve as one of the surest touchstones of literary judgment in our contemporary American letters. The reader upon whom *My Antonia** bursts unheralded, who senses the quality of that book and understands why it is different from the mass of novels he has been reading, may be assured forthwith that he has begun to develop a taste for literature. And he would be fortunate who should come to feel thus, through Miss Cather, the first impinging upon his consciousness of the world of art. He would be saved forever from the still too common assumption that art and artists are fragile, dilettante, somewhat bawdy things—worthy to be seriously considered only by persons who have had something earnest left out of their constitutions and who consequently shirk the serious things of life.

Miss Cather has not set for herself her austere, yet gracious, standards on purpose to attract either the dilettante or the Philistine. The prairies of Nebraska, of which she so often writes, do not lend themselves readily to the literary delectation of those who use reading only as an avenue through which they may escape from life. Brooding above them, she has sought to do for them what Dante strove to accomplish for the universe: to see life steadily and see it whole. It is not for nothing that she makes Jim Burden ponder so thoughtfully the proud words of Vergil: "*Primus ego in patriam mecum. . . deducam Mucas.*"

The reader whom Miss Cather has awakened will, of course, in time go beyond her. Indeed, her structural weaknesses can hardly escape notice very long. But this is secondary. Nothing could be further from the truth than the rather prevalent modern notion in criticism, that appreciation consists in the ability to eliminate. Time eliminates very, very quickly, and this is a busy world: we save what we can! And since we grow,

*Because of the limitations of our Press, throughout this essay the initial of Antonia is left without the acute accent.

in reading as in living not through impoverishing but through enriching our lives, the important thing in reading Miss Cather is simply to sense the warm current of life that pulses through all her books — something genuine, individual, and unashamed, in a country where novels, like clothes, are ruthlessly standardized—to sniff the prairies and shiver in the winds that blow over them, to feel your heart beat to the high, hard days of the pioneers.

I

Willa Sibert Cather was born near Winchester, Virginia, in 1875, of Irish and Alsatian stock. Virginia has thus far figured but incidentally in her novels: Jim Burden, of *My Antonia*, is sent to Nebraska from his father's old farm under the Blue Ridge; and Mahailey, the old servant of *One of Ours*, has made a similar pilgrimage. Miss Cather too made that pilgrimage. When she was nine years old, her father located on a ranch in the sparsely-settled country near Red Cloud—the “Black Hawk” of *My Antonia*. Thus the girl's impressionable years belonged to the west, and the Bohemians and Scandinavians who far out-numbered the native Americans on the prairies influenced profoundly the life of her spirit. On her pony she rode about the foreign settlements, striving to see and to appreciate an alien point of view, grasping eagerly, with the artist's unconscious zest, at the only life within her reach. “I have never found any intellectual excitement more intense than I used to feel when I spent a morning with one of these pioneer women at her baking or butter-making. I used to ride home in the most unreasonable state of excitement; I always felt as if they told me so much more than they said—as if I had actually got inside another person's skin.”

After attending the high school at Red Cloud, Miss Cather entered the University of Nebraska, from which she was graduated in 1895. Although she had begun writing while in college, she did not publish her first book, *April Twilights*, until 1903. Meanwhile she was experiencing life, at home and abroad. “I couldn't have got as much out of those nine years if I had been

writing." Also, she wanted to acquire a competence so that when she did begin to write, she would not be at the mercy of commercialized magazines. She had newspaper experience on the Pittsburg *Leader*, and she taught English in the high school at Allegheny, Pennsylvania. From 1906 to 1912 she was on the staff of *McClure's Magazine*, for four years as managing editor. "I had a delightful sense of freedom when I'd saved up enough to take a house in Cherry Valley, New York, and could begin work on my first novel, *Alexander's Bridge*."

In her early college days, Miss Cather says she was indifferent to style: then she came under the influence of Henry James. "In those days, no one seemed so wonderful as Henry James; for me, he was the perfect writer." It is curious that critics, explaining *Alexander's Bridge*, cannot see any further than Edith Wharton: Miss Cather went directly to Mrs. Wharton's master, James. A more personal influence was that of Sarah Orne Jewett, who gave her the best advice anybody can give a young writer: "Write it as it is, don't try to make it like this or that. You can't do it in anybody else's way; you will have to make a way of your own. If the way happens to be new, don't let that frighten you. Don't try to write the kind of short story that this or that magazine wants; write the truth and let them take it or leave it."

Since she left *McClure's*, Miss Cather has given all her time to writing. She spends five or six months each winter in New York City, and here she does all her work. In the summer she is generally in the West, renewing her experience of the life she interprets. "I cannot produce my kind of work away from the American idiom."

II

One of Miss Cather's critics, speaking of *O Pioneers!*—points out that a scattered effect might have been expected in a novel "which takes its title from Whitman and which is dedicated to the memory of Sarah Orne Jewett, 'in whose beautiful and delicate work there is the perfection that endures.'" This judgment manages to achieve the one thing in the world which is

only less difficult than being exactly right: it is exactly wrong. It is precisely because Miss Cather has been able to appreciate both Whitman and Miss Jewett, because her soul was hungry for music and the arts at the same time that her heart clung passionately to the land, that she is the novelist she has become. Her love of common things has saved her from trifling, from the curious detachment from life which persons intensely interested in the arts so often achieve, and which is so absolutely fatal to any honest creation. And on the other hand, her hunger for beauty has made her see just where are the limitations of common things, has preserved her from the provincialism that might otherwise have clouded her work. It would not have been desirable for the interpreter of the frontier herself to be guided in every particular by the standards which prevail on the frontier. As Wordsworth long ago perceived, detachment plus sympathy is necessary for understanding. Jim Burden, studying Vergil and thinking of the "hired girls", understands this inevitable connection, which so many of Miss Cather's readers have failed utterly to perceive: "It came over me, as it had never done before, the relation between girls like those and the poetry of Vergil. If there were no girls like them in the world, there would be no poetry."

There is no trace in Miss Cather of what has been called in recent literature the "revolt from the village", none of the bitter superciliousness of Mr. Sinclair Lewis's attitude towards Main Street. As passionately as any of the moderns, she believes in the fulfilment of the individual life. Way back in *Alexander's Bridge*, so different in tone from her later work, she wrote: "There was only one thing that had an absolute value for each individual, and it was just that original impulse, that feeling of self in one's own breast." The same philosophy lies at the roots of *The Professor's House*. But for her, individualism does not mean the shirking of responsibilities—to one's self or to others. Marian Forrester does shirk them, but she is Miss Cather's *lost* lady. Thea Kronborg and Alexandra Bergson both take husbands in the end—art and business alone do not suffice for satisfaction. And the greatest portrait in Miss

Cather's gallery is not Thea, who fulfills her destiny in the Metropolitan Opera House: it is my Antonia, who has borne fourteen children to a commonplace man and never found her way out of the hinterland. "She was a battered woman now, not a lovely girl; but she still had that something which fires the imagination, could still stop one's breath for a moment by a look or a gesture that somehow revealed the meaning in common things." It is just that—"the meaning in common things"—that Antonia's creator has tried to reveal.

Miss Cather's characters belong to their country. When they are detached, they carry it with them wherever they go, in their hearts. Fred Ottenburg observes of Thea that "none of us who came later can ever hope to rival Moonstone in the impression we make. Her scale of values will always be the Moonstone scale. And, with an artist, that *is* an advantage." Alexandra, in *O Pioneers!*—is soaked through with rain at her brother's grave. "I think it has done me good to get cold clear through like this, once. I don't believe I shall suffer so much any more. . . . After you once get cold clear through, the feeling of the rain on you is sweet."

Certainly this contrasts sharply with Miss Cather's treatment of the city, in the earlier novels at least. Thea in Chicago finds almost nothing "that went into her subconscious self and took root there." Only when she goes to Arizona, to Panther Canyon, does she again find "things which seemed destined for her". Certainly the view of Washington and of those engaged in government service presented in *The Professor's House* is not enthusiastic. It is patriotic writing in the best and highest sense of the term: it stings us into salutary shame with the realization of what our government has become. And in *O Pioneers!* Carl Linstrum's description of life in New York can hardly be without significance:

We are all alike; we have no ties, we know nobody, we own nothing. When one of us dies, they scarcely know where to bury him. Our landlady and the delicatessen man are our mourners, and we leave nothing behind us but a frock-coat and a fiddle, or an easel, or a typewriter, or

whatever tool we get our living by. All we have ever managed to do is to pay our rent, the exorbitant rent that one has to pay for a few square feet near the heart of things. We have no house, no place, no people of our own. We live in the streets, in the parks, in the theatres. We sit in restaurants and concert halls and look about at the hundreds of our own kind and shudder.

Indeed it is not until *My Mortal Enemy*, 1926, that we find a really sympathetic treatment of a city in a Cather novel. Here the Madison Square district in New York is lovingly presented: Miss Cather seems to brood above it, to transmute it, as she did of old with the Nebraska prairies.

So far then Miss Cather belongs to the frontier. When it comes to a choice between the gaudy and the drab, between the tinsel and the substance, she is all for the substance, even if she must take the drab along with it. But nobody who has read Jim Laird's bitter denunciation in "The Sculptor's Funeral" can accuse her of idealizing the frontier, and it is evident from the general tone of her work that she does not idealize America. She hates the passion for uniformity which has settled down upon us, and she finds its beginnings clear back in the days of *Antonia*, when Old Russian Ivar protests against it. Certainly Gladys Farmer, of *One of Ours*, the beauty-loving school teacher in a Philistine community, is a figure almost as pathetic as Claude Wheeler himself. In her own person, Miss Cather has resisted the rise of the commercial spirit in her alma mater. She fears the possibility of "a coming generation which tries to cheat its æsthetic sense by buying things instead of by making anything".

Her early experiences developed in Miss Cather an appreciation of the "foreigner", as well as a tolerance for alien points of view. It is just as evident in *My Antonia* that Miss Cather sympathizes with the young men who prefer the society of the immigrant "hired girls" to that of the native Americans as it is that she goes with Thea when, after her return from Chicago, she scandalizes the villagers by associating with the Mexicans, the only musical group in the community. Even the "hired girls" of questionable character send home their wages to pay

off the family debts, and you feel that Miss Cather respects them more—the three Bohemian Marys — and would have you respect them more than the blameless native girls who, because it is the tradition of their class to consider housework beneath them, simply sit quietly at home and bear poverty. The war-time crusade against the use of foreign languages left Miss Cather cold. "Our law-makers", she remarks, "have a rooted conviction that a boy can be a better American if he speaks only one language than if he speaks two." She is not afraid to present Antonia in her final phase as having almost forgotten her English through the exclusive use of Bohemian in her home. Antonia has even committed the unpardonable sin of speaking Bohemian to the children: they do not learn English until they go to school. Miss Cather indeed goes so far as to pin her hope for renaissance in both American life and letters not to the native American but to the foreign stock. She hopes that something that went into the soil with the pioneers may come out again, "not only in sturdy traits of character, but in elasticity of mind, in an honest attitude toward the realities of life, in certain qualities of feeling and imagination. . . . It is in that great cosmopolitan country known as the Middle West that we may hope to find young talent which will challenge the pale proprieties, the insincere, conventional optimism of our art and thought."

This is the utterance of a modern, and Miss Cather is modern—in her frankness, in her general freedom from sentimentality, even in her slight, occasional touches of worldliness. But her rebellion always is quite without bitterness, for—unlike many of the moderns—she has retained faith. How fine is Father Duchene's comment in *The Professor's House* on the dead city which Tom Outland found in the mesa: "Like you, I feel a reverence for this place. Wherever humanity has made that hardest of all starts and lifted itself out of mere brutality, is a sacred spot." *O Pioneers!* and *My Mortal Enemy* both show real appreciation of the Catholic Church, and Jim Burden's ardent Protestant grandfather in *My Antonia* embodies all that is manliest in the Protestant attitude. How admirable is the picture of the country prayer meeting in *The Song of the Lark*.

You feel the littleness of these people, with their pitiful, pinched lives, but you feel, too, the sincerity of their religious experiences, their grip on the rockbottom essentials of life. The sick girl who asked for faith "when all the way before seemed dark", and the old woman from the depot settlement, with six sons in railroad service, who spoke of "the engines that race with death", and who prayed "for the boys on the road, who know not at what moment they may be cut off"—these are unforgettable figures.

Again, Miss Cather has faith in humanity—that priceless, neglected sort of faith, without which belief in a God behind men seems so curiously powerless. In her article for the *Nation* on "Nebraska: The End of the First Cycle", she does indeed admit a mood of disillusion. "In Nebraska, as in so many other States, we must face the fact that the splendid story of the pioneers is finished, and that no new story worthy to take its place has yet begun." But she is far from being wholly discouraged. "Surely the materialism and extravagance of this hour are a passing phase. They will mean no more in a half century from now than will the 'hard times' of twenty-five years ago—which are already forgotten. The population is as clean and full of vigor as the soil; there are no old grudges, no heritages of disease or hate."

III

Miss Cather's technique is less important than her material. Whatever else her youthful enthusiasm for Henry James may have taught her, it did not give her James's passion for unity or his horror of intruding directly into a story the viewpoint of the author. *O Pioneers!* is decidedly loose as to structure and contains considerable extraneous material. There is a span of sixteen years between Parts I and II, the interval giving Marie and Emil a chance to grow up, and Alexandra the opportunity to turn the waste-land into a prosperous farm. It is not quite fair to say that the Marie-Emil tragedy is a separate story: the catastrophe is needed to bring out the character of Alexandra, but the incident is developed at such

length that it threatens for a time to usurp the principal interest. *My Antonia* is almost episodic. The story is told by Jim Burden, a prosperous, mis-mated New York lawyer who grew up with Antonia in Nebraska, and the machinery which the introduction supplies is not only superfluous but also a little clumsy. His manuscript, which makes up the book, is rich material, all of it, but much of it is detached from even the loose sort of unity that the biographical plan of novel-writing provides. *The Song of the Lark* bears more directly upon a single theme, but there is so much detail that the structure suggests Frank Norris or Dreiser rather than James. *One of Ours*, though it naturally and unavoidably breaks in the middle, seems to me concentrated, definitely-organized to a degree which Miss Cather had not hitherto achieved. In *A Lost Lady*, which followed *One of Ours*, this tendency worked itself out to a nearly perfect consummation. But when *The Professor's House* appeared, it was at once evident that Miss Cather had produced what was structurally either her completest failure or her most dazzling experiment. *The Professor's House*, I think, is her most subtle book, a work almost as rich as *My Antonia*, though in a vastly more sophisticated way, full of nourishing food for the mind and the spirit of somewhat disillusioned, but not despairing, maturity. But whatever may be said of the importance of Tom Outland's influence on Dr. St. Peter cannot greatly diminish the daring with which Miss Cather has, for almost eighty pages, interrupted the professor's story to inject Tom's own account of his explorations and discoveries years before in the Southwest.

In short, Miss Cather's attitude towards technique is English, not French. Even *My Mortal Enemy*, short as it is, is externally two episodes, though a whole lifetime is implied in them. And *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, that gorgeous kaleidoscope of shifting colors and spiritual beauty, is structurally hardly more than a tale. "Tricks" are not numerous in either her presentation or her style. Sometimes she aims to be convincing through pretending that her characters are real people, as: "Eden Bower was, at twenty, very much the same person that we all know her

to be at forty. . . ." Or, "Cressida Garnet, as all the world knows, was lost on the *Titanic*." In the Chicago episode of *The Song of the Lark*, she introduces Theodore Thomas, and Madison Bowers too seems to be drawn from life. Occasionally there is a flash that suggests the "stream of consciousness" writers, as when, in *One of Ours*, she says of the Marne: "The fact that the river had a pronounceable name, with a hard Western 'r' standing like a keystone in the middle of it, somehow gave one's imagination a firmer hold on the situation." Sometimes, however, Miss Cather is as old-fashioned as here in *A Lost Lady*: "But we will begin this story with a summer morning long ago, when, Mrs. Forrester was still a young woman, and Sweet Water was a town of which great things were expected." The introduction of Frank Ellinger in the same story is not exactly subtle. The author does not trust us to receive our own impressions of this character. Through Niel she guides us: "Niel was very much interested in this man, the hero of many ambiguous stories. He didn't know whether he liked him or not. He knew nothing bad about him, but he felt something evil."

Miss Cather believes that an artist does not choose her subject but is chosen by it, and that the choice is made unconsciously in the experiences of youth. "You must know a subject as a child before you ever had any idea of writing, to instill into it, in a story, the true feeling." All her own material was gathered together before she was twenty. Since then she has been recollecting and reassembling. In the preface to her edition of Sarah Orne Jewett she says:

It is a common fallacy that a writer, if he is talented enough, can achieve this poignant quality by improving upon his subject-matter, by using his 'imagination' upon it and twisting it to suit his purpose. The truth is that by such a process (which is not imaginative at all!) he can at best produce only a brilliant sham, which, like a badly built and pretentious house, looks poor and shabby in a few years. If he achieves anything noble, anything enduring, it must be by giving himself absolutely to his material. And this gift of sympathy is his great gift; it is the fine thing in

him that alone can make his work fine. He fades away into the land and people of his heart, he dies of love only to be born again.

We have Miss Cather's word for it that she has been working for a more objective presentation of her materials. "I'm trying to cut out all analysis, observation, description, even the picture-making quality, in order to make things and people tell their own story simply by juxtaposition without any persuasion or explanation on my part." Certainly she traveled far in this direction between *Alexander's Bridge* and her two latest books.

She believes that "interior decorating" has long obscured the purpose of the novelist, that novels have been "overfurnished". Power of description and of observation she rates as but a low part of the novelist's equipment, and she rebels against the Zola-esque notion that realism consists in cataloguing. For her, realism is "an attitude of mind on the part of the writer toward his material, a vague definition of the sympathy and candor with which he accepts, rather than chooses, his theme". As examples of the proper treatment of furnishings, she cites *The Scarlet Letter* and the best work of Tolstoy. Here the external and the internal are synthesized, so that the former, instead of clogging the pages, comes to exist "in the emotional penumbra of the characters themselves." She sums up: "Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there—that, it seems to me, is created."

Miss Cather's attitude toward physical description of the sensations in the novel again marks her off from many of the moderns. She does not blink things and there is no squeamishness in her. The descriptions of Shimerda's suicide and of Jim's rattlesnake in *My Antonia* are quite horrible enough. She knows that human beings have bodies and she is not ashamed to speak of them. But when physical passion enters her world, as in *O Pioneers!* and *A Lost Lady*—the details are left to inference. Miss Cather says she cannot imagine anything more terrible than would be *Romeo and Juliet*, rewritten by Mr. D. H. Lawrence! "A novel crowded with physical sensations is no

less a catalogue than one crowded with furniture." As she puts it,

How wonderful it would be if we could throw all the furniture out of the window; and along with it, all the meaningless reiterations concerning physical sensations, all the tiresome old patterns, and leave the room as bare as the stage of a Greek theatre, or as that house into which the glory of Pentecost descended; leave the scene bare for the play of emotions, great and little—for the nursery tale, no less than the tragedy, is killed by tasteless amplitude. The elder Dumas enunciated a great principle when he said that to make a drama, a man needed only one passion and four walls.

IV

I have already suggested Miss Cather's two favorite types—the pioneer and the artist. Spiritually they are not detached but related, for the artist is the pioneer of the spirit. The author's comment in *O Pioneers!* is significant: "A pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves."

The pioneer stage finds expression in *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia*. Art—in the form of music¹—is most strongly developed in the study of Thea Kronborg's development—not from Nebraska this time, but from "Moonstone", Colorado—in *The Song of the Lark*. In these three books the protagonists are women. But there are two moods in Nebraska: the heroic, spacious, epical dreams of the pioneers, and the somewhat disillusioned, materialistic attitude that followed. This intrudes toward the close of both *My Antonia* and *O Pioneers!* but we are not fully into backwater until we come to *One of Ours*. Here prosperity has so utterly failed to bring happiness that the only escape is through death by way of the World War. And here the protagonist is a man, Claude Wheeler. It is these four books that I take together as constituting the heart of Miss Cather's message and work.

¹"I get more entertainment from . . . [writing] than any I could buy, except the privilege of hearing a few great musicians and singers. To listen to them interests me as much as a good morning's work."

The *Nation* article, already quoted, testifies to Miss Cather's personal conviction that something has happened to the frontier. Her more sensitive characters are equally aware of the change. I quote two passages.

Niel Herbert reflects in *A Lost Lady*:

The Old West had been settled by dreamers, great-hearted adventurers who were impractical to the point of magnificence; a courteous brotherhood strong in attack but weak in defence, who could conquer but could not hold. Now all the vast territory they had won was to be at the mercy of men like Ivy Peters, who had never dared anything, never risked anything. They would drink up the mirage, dispel the morning freshness, root out the great brooding spirit of freedom, the generous, easy life of the great land-holders. The space, the colour, the princely carelessness of the pioneer they would destroy and cut up into profitable bits, as the match factory splinters the primeval forest.

And Claude, in *One of Ours*:

Claude felt sure that when he was a little boy and all the neighbors were poor, they and their houses and farms had more individuality. The farmers took time then to plant fine cotton-wood groves on their places, and to set osage orange hedges along the borders of their fields. Now these trees were all being cut down and grubbed up. Just why, nobody knew; they impoverished the land. . . they made the snow drift nobody had them any more. With prosperity came a kind of callousness; . . . everybody wanted to destroy the old things they used to take pride in. The orchards, which had been nursed and tended so carefully twenty years ago, were now left to die of neglect. It was less trouble to run into town in an automobile and buy fruit than it was to raise it.

The people themselves had changed. He could remember when all the farmers in this community were friendly toward each other; now they were continually having lawsuits. Their sons were either stingy and grasping, or extravagant and lazy and they were always stirring up trouble. Evidently, it took more intelligence to spend money than to make it.

O Pioneers! represents Miss Cather's discovery of her field, and you can still feel that young ecstasy in its pages. *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia* should be read together, as presenting the same sort of life, though the latter is by far the greater book. It is less conventional and starker than *O Pioneers!* It is true that *My Antonia* contains no such horrible tragedy as that in which Marie and Emil figure. Yet that tragedy itself is not without its touch of immaturity and melodrama: it has some traces of the very young writer's attempt to be stark and terrible. And in the larger aspects, *My Antonia* makes no such concession to the "happy ending" as the earlier venture presents when, at the end, Carl Linstrum comes back to Alexandra and marries her, leaving us to infer that "they lived happily ever after". *My Antonia*, too, finds the secret of life in love, but—at the end of the book, it is not romance that holds her, but love, which—through years of marriage and childbearing—has passed on to something beyond romance, and greater.

Alexandra Bergson and her family are Swedish; Antonia Shimerda is Bohemian. Both books have the same extraordinary sense of reality—the same fidelity to pioneer life, the same passionate honesty, the same sombre lonely beauty. Miss Cather tells us she cannot write from notes: she writes from recollection. That is the effect these books give: their details are not those of Belasco stage-settings, worked up for the occasion: they are bathed in memory, something lived with, recharactered through the experience of a lifetime, and thus prepared as proper subject-matter for art. Both books are rich in representatives of other races and racial groups beside those embodied in the principal characters, and there are many sidelights on national temperament and ideals. In *O Pioneers!* Marie Shabata and her husband are Bohemian, Amédée and Angélique are French, and old Ivar—like Peter and Pavel in *My Antonia*—is Russian.

Alexandra is the kind of person Captain Forrester has in mind when he speaks of the West as having developed wholly out of dreams—"the homesteader's and the prospector's and the contractor's. We dreamed the railroads across the mountains,

just as I dreamed my place on the Sweet Water." She becomes the head of the family after her father's death, and it is her far-seeing vision, her faith in the land, which keeps her stolid and vacillating brothers tied each to his task in the "hard times" when they are asking only for release. Her self-denial is in marked contrast to their selfishness, and their greed for the land that she has won keeps happiness in marriage away from her for years.

Antonia does not see the future of the land like Alexandra: she is a part of it: she is sentient: she feels, she does not plan. But her feelings run deeper than Alexandra's and she has none of the Swedish girl's stolidness. She comes out of a family without the barest necessities of life. The mother and the older brother are petty, spiteful people—the narrowest and grubbiest sort of Czech. The father, a sensitive man of considerable cultivation, kills himself to escape conditions he is ill-fitted to endure. Antonia herself is not idealized. When, after her father's death, she works in the fields like a man, she loses her "nice ways," as Jim's grandmother had said she would. "Antonia ate noisily now . . . and she yawned often at the table and kept stretching her arms over her head, as if they ached." Later, when the Italian Vannis come to Black Hawk, she develops the dance craze and the things that go with it. Nothing really happens to Antonia, in an objective sense, save that she manages to get herself betrayed by a rascally railroad conductor and left with a baby to support. "She loved it from the first as dearly as if she'd had a ring on her finger, and was never ashamed of it." As if this were not audacious enough, Miss Cather then leaves Antonia for twenty years, and re-introduces her, the wife of a commonplace Bohemian, the mother of fourteen children, "a battered woman" who has lost her teeth but never "the fire of life". What would Sherwood Anderson have made of such a story! Miss Cather makes it her most thrilling study in the fulfilment of a woman's life.

The Song of the Lark is the longest of all Miss Cather's novels—almost five hundred closely-printed pages. It is the most cosmopolitan in setting, also. Thea Kronborg's story, an attempt

"to deal only with the simple and concrete beginnings which color and accent an artist's work", begins about 1890 in the parsonage of a small Colorado town, moves later to Chicago and the life of a music student there, in the days when Theodore Thomas was establishing his orchestra, first introduces in Miss Cather's fiction the canyons of the Southwest, and ends in New York, where Thea is singing at the Metropolitan. Thea's period of study abroad is passed over.

The opening chapters of *The Song of the Lark* present "Moonstone", Colorado with extraordinary fidelity. From the very beginning—through Doctor Archie's special solicitude for Thea, ill with pneumonia—we are prepared for something from her. This first section is rich in character sketches of the many who influence the growing artist-soul—Doctor Archie; the Kohlers, with their quaint German ways, forever planting trees to make shade; Professor Wunsch, the drunken German music-master who first awakens Thea's musical aspirations; Ray Kennedy, the ill-starred young brakeman who loves her, and whose life insurance is the means of starting her out on her career; and Spanish Johnny, with his sensitive spirit and his disreputable ways.

It is interesting to compare Miss Cather's treatment of Thea's career with that which it would have received at the hands of some cheap romantic novelist. The life of an opera singer!—it is precisely the glittering sort of thing (to the uninitiated) that appeals to those who write for what Gamaliel Bradford calls "the vast acceptance of those who are wept over at lone midnight by the shop-girl and the serving-maid". Such a treatment would have been wholly external: the years of struggle passed over quickly that attention might be lavished on the gay, glad triumph of a petted darling. There could have been no such study as Miss Cather has made of the artist's inner life, of the actual process of creation. Success is not easy for Thea. Even after she has established herself, she has difficulty in getting into a new rôle: there is a stage when she simply confronts it dumbly. Nor would a romantic novelist have permitted the treatment of Thea herself that Miss Cather has chosen. The singer would probably

have been bawdy—which Thea, being a *great* artist, is not—but her shortcomings would all have been picturesque and interesting shortcomings. Thea's quarrelsomeness and impatience, her dislike, even her passionate hatred of other singers—caused and conditioned by her devotion to Art, her resentment that *this* is what they make of It—these things could hardly have been included. Nobody who was not passionately interested in music and very familiar with the temper of its great interpreters could possibly have written *The Song of the Lark*.²

Finally, in *One of Ours*, we find the frontier that has developed into the Middle West. This is the story of Claude Wheeler—simple, sensitive, unselfish—from his young manhood on a Nebraska farm, through the disastrous experiment of marriage with a cold, pious, shallow, and selfish woman, to his heroic death in the World War.

Nobody has ever questioned that the picture of Nebraska before and during the War in the first part of *One of Ours* is superbly done. When the book was published, the usual criticism was that the author had failed to work out her problem. Having developed the early life of Claude Wheeler and his conflict with his wife, she reached an impasse, and found her way out by sending him off to the War to be killed, without ever having achieved any more than a temporary adjustment to life under the stress of militant emotion. At the time, I shared this impression of the book. As I re-read it now, this opinion seems wholly unjust. In the first place, Claude's marriage is finished before he ever leaves for France. Enid is in China, and there is not one chance in a hundred that she will ever return to him. Moreover, the book is not, in any primary sense, a study of marriage. It is the story of "one of ours"—a title, that, as tender as *Sister Carrie*!—one of the generation that was sacrificed to the War-God. Marriage is only an episode. I see now that my former criticism of Miss Cather was an unconscious testimony

² There is much in Thea's temperament and experience which suggests that the character was studied from Olive Fremstad. See Miss Cather's "Three American Singers," (Fremstad, Louise Homer, Geraldine Farrar) in *McClure's*, December, 1913.

that she had achieved exactly the effect she sought. Claude Wheeler's story *is* incomplete. It is incomplete precisely because that was the case with the life of his whole generation. Alas! it was the great tragedy of the War that these boys *were* herded to France with their problems unsolved, that they were shovelled into the earth without having understood life or the War or themselves.

This is not to say that the second part of *One of Ours*, worked up at second-hand, has anything like the validity of the first part. The War itself is most thrilling in Miss Cather's pages, not in France but in Nebraska, when reports of the conflict first begin to come in. The frantic reading of newspapers, the hunting for old neglected maps, the strange, wild tugging at the heart, the wonder of a horizon really enlarging at last to the breadth of the world—that all this is authentic must be realized by everyone who lived through those terrible days. But in its own way, the French part is a *tour de force* of its own, especially for a woman to have written.

Miss Cather does not idealize the War. She realizes its futility. No mind as clear as hers could fail to see that—the futility of all war. But she sees beyond this, what the professional propagandist cannot see, the flood of generous emotion, the gallant blooming of sensitive souls which, at the time, the somewhat vulgar conflict induced. It is this which has appealed to her as an artist, and it is this that she has sought to preserve in her book.

Professor Boynton's objection^{*} that in Claude the American soldier is idealized will hardly bear examination. Claude is not, of course, a "typical" soldier. But the fact that ex-service men find him idealized is not half so conclusive as Mr. Boynton seems to think. Claude himself, had he lived, would doubtless have repudiated his French emotions after his return to Nebraska. His mother realizes this in the discouraging days after the Armistice, "when it seemed as if the flood of meanness and greed had been held back just long enough for the boys to go over and then swept down and engulfed everything that was

^{*} Percy H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans*, University of Chicago Press, 1924.

left at home." She lives to thank God that her boy did not have this to endure. "He died believing his own country better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be." Again, "But one she knew who could ill bear disillusion . . . safe, safe."

Claude knows before he dies that America will not achieve what she entered the conflict for, yet he accepts it as something that was "put up" to his generation for some reason he knows not what,—perhaps for the sins of the fathers. But his disillusion over the cause does not at all lower his personal idealism or destroy his sense that in this glad giving of himself for an ideal he has at last found his place. There is abundant evidence in the letters of soldiers that at the time this mood—irrational as it is—did exist.

V

Sanity, magnanimity, love of beauty, enthusiasm for living—these seem, then, to me among the outstanding qualities of Miss Cather's work thus far, and it is these things that she gives to her reader. To her, one might apply Harsanyi's words at the close of *The Song of the Lark*, when a newspaperman asks him for Thea's "secret": "It is every artist's secret . . . passion." That is all. It is an open secret and perfectly safe. Like heroism, it is inimitable in cheap materials. Magnanimity is an outstanding characteristic of Miss Cather's women. There is nothing in all her writing more touching than the picture of Alexandra, at the close of *O Pioneers!*—planning to get a pardon for the man who murdered her brother. And Thea, when she learns that Fred Ottenburg has a wife living, goes into no hysterics of moral emotion. Remaining loyal to the ideals of her childhood, she sends him away, but later—after he is free and when she is a great singer—she marries him. And it is with Thea that I prefer to leave Miss Cather, brooding over the Indian remains of the Southwest. "The stream and the broken pottery; what was any art but an effort to make a sheath, a mould in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose?"

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT.

University of Washington.

BOOK REVIEWS

CARLYLE RESTORED.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS CARLYLE'S WRITINGS AND ANA. By Isaac Watson Dyer. The Southworth Press. Portland, Maine. Pp. xii 587. Portrait. 1928.

Thomas Carlyle's reputation has had strange vicissitudes. Every Carlylean knows how it floundered in obscurity in Edinburgh and Craigenputtock, sprang into brilliant light on the publication of *The French Revolution* (1837), rocketed even higher perhaps with the lectures that followed, wavered with Carlyle's participation in current attempts to diagnose the economic malaise of the 'thirties and 'forties, flared up again with *Cromwell*, burned brightly now as an indication of a great moral leader and prophet, shone serenely in complete canonical dignity with the publication of *Frederick*, and remained until his death a steady phenomenon in the literary heavens, with only here and there a few dissenting and irascible voices. Carlyleans know also the tremendous blow which, in the minds of many, nearly felled that reputation when Froude published the *Reminiscences* and the biography. By this time, however, a new literary atmosphere had begun to appear overshadowing the earnestness and moral strain which Carlyle eminently represented, so that not every reader of the new generation cared greatly whether Froude's disclosures (or frauds) might even defeat the plan to erect Boehm's statue of Carlyle on the Embankment. Concurrently with a reorganization of men's notions of Carlyle's personal nature there occurred a quiet re-conceiving of Carlyle's principles as "dating" themselves and as bearing a kernel of truth in tough and knotty integuments of style and manner. By 1881 Carlyle's reputation as a thinker had begun to lose vitality, and his reputation as a moral force, a picturesque character, and a permeating influence gained even greater acceptance than it had received when his works were more widely and seriously read, a fate that has overtaken not a few literary figures. Since the 'nineties, Carlyle

has met with various receptions: enthusiasm from the haters of Froude; reverence from people old enough to remember the might of his name and from a few of the young who thrust *Sartor Resartus* between them and the devil of religious doubt: scorn from those who take (or elect to take) Froude's biography as a reliable picture of the man, his thought, and his private life; and analytical interest from a small group of scholars engrossed in establishing facts—sometimes minute facts—and indubitable relationships between the man and his times. I have not pretended to trace here a complete and flawless outline of Carlyle's "rise and fall", (if I may use the words of Mr. Norwood Young, whose *Carlyle: His Rise and Fall* recently attacked Carlyle with more violence than veracity). The fact remains, however, that to many readers, when they hear Carlyle's name mentioned, think only of dyspepsia, irritability, Scotch plaid, a broad black hat, a stern rocky countenance, some stern rocky morality, and perhaps the apocryphal "Jenny, shut thy mouth."

That we know far too little of the real Carlyle, and, moreover, that there has been a flood of superficial and grossly misleading expositions of him, is one of the facts brought home to any one who opens Mr. Dyer's bibliography. Many of us already knew that out of the vast literature on the subject only a few were worthy of attention, not to speak of confidence. To throw more light on this subject is one of the finest services which Mr. Dyer's work has indirectly performed. It has set before us, with critical and informative commentary, the great array of titles of as many of the *ana* as he has been able to draw from the numerous obscure corners where literature on a once highly popular figure is likely to drop unobserved, and to list all of the best editions of Carlyle's works, both separate and collected. The task has been truly gigantic. And Mr. Dyer, aided by the admirable Southworth Press, has accomplished the task with distinction. Besides the bibliography proper and the section devoted to *ana*—both richly filled with cross references—there are four Appendixes containing material on a little-known invention by Carlyle of a new horse-shoe, a list of all the known sources of *The French Revolution*, an article on *Sartor Resartus*, and addenda to the magazine list. Many Carlyleans will welcome the section on the portraits, busts, statues, and photo-

graphs of Carlyle, and the interesting article on them that immediately follows.

The two features of the bibliography that will commend it to any Carlylean are its format and its wealth of critical comment on the titles. The Southworth Press has given the work a handsome, durable, dignified dress that places it among the finest of its kind. The heavy black buckram, the absence of adornment except for the title on the back strip, the large page, the ample margins, the clear and dignified type—all distinguish it as an example of the harmony of utility and art. The critical comment is unexpectedly full. One can browse indefinitely. It is not too much to say that by reading the work through one might have practically all the chief facts about Carlyle and his work, at least be far on the way to a rich understanding of both the man and the complex problems arising from his effort.

Mr. Dyer's bibliography is one of the major events of the season in Carlyle investigation. It will have several results for Carlyleans: it will reveal how little has been done through unemotional and painstaking analysis; it will suggest approximate lines of research; it will revive interest in the current effort to draw a true biographical likeness of the man; it will suggest how much of the "Carlyle literature" can safely be ignored as being biased, perverse, or stupid; and it will help synthesize the various tendencies making toward a satisfactory interpretation of Carlyle as a character and a literary figure. A more general result may be a quickening of the already accelerated interest in the Victorian era by scholars and intelligent readers in general. The nineteenth century is rapidly ceasing to be regarded as the no-man's-land for the literary investigator. What was maintained of it, that it was too chaotic because too close to us, is no longer quite true. As time passes, the era stands out in its own individual integrity. And a bibliography such as Mr. Dyer's invites us to study the era through its most potent representative.

CHARLES FREDERICK HARROLD.

Michigan State Normal College.

CONCLUDING COLONEL HOUSE

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE. Edited by Charles Seymour. Vols. III and IV. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1928.

These two concluding volumes of the *Papers* of Mr. Wilson's personal representative, containing, so the editor tells us, but "a very small proportion" of the total papers deposited in the Yale library, cover the period from American entrance into the war to the end of 1919. Their value, however, should not be underestimated because they do not represent all. Valuable for what they do bring to light, these volumes also indicate the manifold activities of Colonel House and provide the specialist with a guide to the collection itself. Meanwhile the layman can acquire a stronger grasp on a period too recent to be well known.

What a normally intelligent man will get from this inside history provides rare opportunities for speculation. Here he finds little as to causes but a great deal as to effects. The intellectual history of the war will probably be written last. The obvious features, such as the military and economic, can be written with ease and definitiveness long before the more subtle. Yet it is not unlikely that the intellectual aspects should be treated first. What is needed, then, is a man who descended into the maelstrom but who survived to gaze upon his experiences with an Olympian impartiality. It is easier for a man who did not eat potato-bread to write the economic history than it is for a man who did not succumb to "making the world safe for democracy" to write the intellectual history.

There is rich and fertile material for the latter approach, as for any other, in these volumes. Diaries and private correspondence, though not infrequently written with an eye to posterity, are bound to reveal the writer. What is disclosed here is a sort of glorified busy-body who liked everyone and understood nothing. Nowhere is there discovered a hard, logical mind grappling with problems that called for the best. Groping and stumbling the Colonel went his way, in no wise sure of his destination. Human, yes; and mediocre. Others, too, whom this generation has been pleased to call great, have to withstand

the pitiless light of their own remarks,—Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau.

In conventional history these *Papers* abound, for House played a big and varied rôle in 1917 and 1918. Whenever English and French agencies wanted anything done, to House they went. He had only to wave the magic wand and bureaucratic regulations ceased to exist. His function, he conceived, was "to keep things running smoothly". But, more than that, he helped to formulate the principles for which the Allies said they were fighting, and on November 11, 1918, he could telegraph his 'Governor': "Autocracy is dead; long live democracy and its immortal leader." Thereafter Peace broke out in Europe. Mr. House had not a little to do with making that Peace which, curiously enough, revived that which had lately died.

Further enumerations of his achievements and interests might be made, but enough has been said to indicate the wealth of raw material to be quarried here. Gratitude indeed is due Professor Seymour for his skillful selection which constitutes the best contribution yet made in English to the history of the World War.

CHARLES F. MULLETT.

University of Missouri.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY HUMANISM

A LITERARY HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN FRANCE. By Henri Bremond. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1928. PP.xxiii,423.

K. L. Montgomery, the translator, has done the English reader a distinct service in this excellent version of the first volume in M. Bremond's great work, *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France* (1916-22); and it is to be hoped that the other five volumes of the work are to be Englished. Bremond (1862—), author of an *Apologie pour Fénelon* and a life of Cardinal Newman, is a Roman Catholic scholar and man of letters, admirably fitted, through the richness of his culture, the liberality of his mind, and the expansiveness of his sympathy, to chronicle the movement of religious thought.

The remaining five volumes deal with seventeenth-century mystics, many of them little known outside of France. One entire volume is devoted to Pascal and the other Port-Royalists.

Volume I, *Devout Humanism*, studies the characters, points of view, and works of the great St. Francis de Sales, the Salesian disciples, Binet and Camus and others, concluding with a long study of Yves de Paris, a Platonizing Doctor of the Church, now almost forgotten, for whom M. Bremond feels, perhaps partly in his character of discoverer, a very great enthusiasm. What is "devout" or "Christian" humanism? It corresponds in part to Dean Inge's Platonic tradition in the Church—the Cambridge Latitudinarians like Whichcote and Cudworth; in part to such Renaissance Catholics as More and Erasmus; its exponents in the early Church were Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Christian humanism believes in the reconciliation of all genuine values—in particular, in the reconciliation of culture and religion. Its ideal is the Christian gentleman,—no bigot, no precisian or Puritan, no "enthusiast"; on the other hand, no libertine, no voluptuary: the man of sound learning, of literary and artistic tastes, of philosophical serenity and detachment, of unpretentious but sincere piety.

M. Bremond is fond of emphasising the contrast between his gracious and polished and charitable humanists and the taut and ascetic men of Port Royal. In his remarks on the controversy between Jesuits and Jansenists commemorated by Pascal's *Provinciales* (1656-7), he takes the side of the former. Religion he views not as the antithesis to culture but as its completion. Christian humanism does not, with St. Paul and the Pauline school, linger dramatically over the gulf which forever separates the law from the gospel, pagan morality from orthodox piety, the "natural" man from the spiritual. "Without neglecting any of the essential truths of Christianity, it brings forward by preference those which appear the most consoling, encouraging, in a word, *human*, which to it seem the most divine and the most conformed to Infinite Goodness. Thus it does not hold that the central dogma is Original Sin, but the Redemption. "Redemption", it is true, implies fault, but a

fault thrice-blessed, since it has procured mankind so great and lovely a Redeemer. *O felix culpa!*"

The "devout humanism" of St. Francis de Sales and the Salesian school presents interesting analogies to the seventeenth-century Anglo-Catholics,—men like Donne, Andrewes, Taylor, Herbert, and Crashaw, preachers and poets whose culture and religion were equally genuine, who "spoiled the Egyptians" of their jewels—borrowed from secular literature, especially the classics—to adorn the Temple of God. In his Introduction, M. Bremond tells us, "Did my scholarship and space allow, I would fain have shown how among the Anglicans of the first half of the seventeenth century was produced a temper analogous to French Devout Humanism, a fore-shadowing of the Oxford Movement; thus showing, also, that the influence of French writers, and notably of François de Sales, was felt across the Channel." There are some interesting references to Herbert and Crashaw (unfortunately not all of them to be located through the index) in the present volume. On page 301, M. Bremond gives a long list of seventeenth-century poems on the subject of the Magdalen, and suggests that Crashaw's celebrated *The Weeper* may have been inspired by César de Nostre-Dame's *Les perles ou les larmes de sainte Madeleine* (1606).

The seventeenth century was the Golden Age of the French Church, as of the English. In M. Bremond it has found an historian and interpreter admirably fitted to exhibit its learning, its culture, its catholicity.

AUSTIN WARREN.

Boston University.

THE HYPOCHONDRIACK. By James Boswell. Edited by Margery Bailey, Ph.D. 2 vols. Cal.: Stanford University Press. 1928.

These essays represent Boswell dressed in the theatrical robes of rationalism: preaching against excess of food or drink, warning those who "have a propensity to amorous inflammation" to be sensible, declaiming against "the horrid irrationality of war". All of which provides cheap and easy fun, if you will. The incongruities remind us of the engravings of the *Cotter's*

Saturday Night which adorned the walls of Poesie Nansie's. But at the same time there is something pathetic and courageous in Boswell's genuine and life-long desire for a rational, ordered, systematized life. "I own I have a respect for every kind of discipline", he here confides to his readers. He possessed, as he told Rousseau, "*un véritable désir de me perfectionner*". And artful as was his correspondence with the philosopher, that phrase at least has ample evidence to support it.

Dr. Bailey is then quite correct, I believe, in calling these anonymous monthly contributions to the *London Magazine* exercises in self-discipline, moral as well as literary. "A man may write at any time, if he will set himself *doggedly* to it." And the "*obstinate resolution*", as Boswell defined his friend's "doggedly", which caused him to continue these exercises for nearly six years, solves the paradox which so many find in the volatile Boswell's triumph of industry and persistence, the *magnum opus* itself.

Unfortunately the reader himself must possess a certain amount of "obstinate resolution" if he would finish these two sizeable volumes of essays. The colloquial vigor, the dramatic genius, the audacities of the *Life* are scarcely suggested. "I will be grave and reserved, though cheerful and communicative of what is *verum atque decens*." This statement in a letter from Boswell to Temple dated 1767, Dr. Bailey aptly applies to the *Essays* themselves. In retrospect he wrote "I perceive they are not so lively as I expected they would be. But they are more learned." Indeed Boswell appears as a person of solid parts quite capable of thinking for himself. Neither here nor in the *Life* is he the mere intellectual shadow of his Hero. If his works seem impregnated with the Johnsonian æther it is partly because Boswell, as well as Johnson, suffered from an obstinate rationality that kept him in perpetual turmoil. Their approach to life was fundamentally the same. Johnson, not without effort, carried his rationalism into the business of living. Boswell, the weaker, tried to do the same, but continually rolled the stone of Sisyphus. The incongruity between the two is more superficial than real. All this is not new to the close student of Boswell,

but the republication of these essays is welcome if only for the needed emphasis they place on Boswell, the serious student of the art of living. *The Hypochondriack* was but one of his "various schemes . . . for getting tollerably through this strange existence." Johnson himself was a second; the *Life* a third.

Dr. Bailey has done a thorough, indeed monumental, piece of editing. One hesitates to appear ungrateful in the presence of so scholarly and generally admirable an edition. And yet at moments one is conscious of a certain failure to preserve a sense of values and of proportion. The notes are sometimes unnecessarily full (e. g. that on Paoli, I, 210). Since this is presumably an edition primarily for scholars, much information that seems directed to the general reader might have been omitted. The section in the Introduction on Boswell's "Treatment of His Sources" suffers likewise from a failure to see these essays in historical perspective. After all, they were ephemeral periodical essays, and as such are hardly to be judged by the canons of creative writing intended for posterity.

The editor's discussion of "The English Malady" is full of interest, but lacks careful definition. Was a disillusioned Primitivism, one questions, really responsible in any appreciable degree for what the age called Hypochondria? And surely Dr. Bailey's assertion that the fundamental cause of the disease was a vague sense of "the loss of the central authority, either of church or state, under which men had lived for centuries", while true, perhaps, for much of the seventeenth century, ignores the intensely personal and essentially selfish nature of the malady in its later form. The typical hypochondria of the eighteenth century came perilously close to emotional self-indulgence. Otherwise the extended Introduction seems generally sound and frequently penetrating.

JOSEPH E. BROWN.

Princeton University.

HISTORICAL READINGS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY THOUGHT. By W. P. Hall and E. A. Beller. New York: The Century Company.

Under this rather pedestrian title two Princeton professors have hidden a most welcome contribution to newer history.

Hithertofore we have had collections of constitutional, economic, political documents. When, however, the historian desired to put his students in touch with some remarkable statement illustrative of changing concepts he was at a complete loss. True, there have been anthologies of philosophy and of science, but these were prepared primarily for as well as by the philosopher or the scientist. Here is gathered together a variety of important *credos* that are more than science, more than philosophy, which are rather the very stuff of history. They indicate more than the leadership of the specialist, they mirror the sentiments, the *esprit*, of thinking people.

Open the book. The editors, who function merely as interlocutors, have arranged their offering well. Thomas Huxley's lecture "On a Piece of Chalk" comes first. Is there any better statement of the implications of evolution? Biology has moved on since Huxley's day, but no modern biologist has outmoded Huxley in zeal for truth, in clarity of presentation, and in appreciation of the high dignity of his calling. Following this we are introduced to that man of surpassing curiosity, Herbert Spencer. "Is There a Social Science?" is a question which exercises as many minds today as in 1890, though in a somewhat different fashion. What Spencer was working for was the interpretation of events as natural phenomena, and the consequent reduction of those events to some law of causation.

The third of the readings takes us from science to the realm of socio-economics. There would, without doubt, be much less loose talk about communism and Marxism if the talkers took down the "Communist Manifesto" of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. What was contained therein was not a call to class warfare, but a statement, not unsupported by history, that class warfare had always existed, that the prevailing economic theory was that of the dominant class, and that, by and large, men tended to act from materialistic rather than from altruistic motives.

In contrast to Marx is the idealistic cry of Peter Kropotkin. "Law and Authority" is one of the classic statements of the doctrine philosophically known as anarchism. To Kropotkin

both law and authority, as external compulsion, not only indicated but also produced ignorance and disorder. Legislation makes the evil quite as much as it attempts to provide a remedy. If more dependence were placed on the moral sense, the essential fiber of the individual would secure the end much quicker and better than force, which really defeats its own effort. Let liberty, equality, and sympathy, not laws and judges, control our actions.

The two final excerpts have to do with Christianity. The first, by Leo Tolstoy, is a call to christianize Christianity, to get away from dogma and forms back to the spirit of the Founder. Christianity, he believes, is a new and higher conception of life. If it were applied to the practical problems of daily life, happiness and peace would result. The last, and to the reviewer's thinking, the most important selection in the book is the Encyclical, "The Condition of Labor", of Leo XIII. Its importance is better established by recalling events of the past six months, and it is not necessary here to make mention of the misconceptions current about the Papacy. Suffice it to indicate the attitude of a great pontiff toward public problems. He pleads for fairness to the working man, withal recognizing the rights of private property. We are reminded, and this was hardly more pregnant in 1890 than now, that man is older than the state. He encourages the right use of wealth, the multiplication of workingmen's societies, and social legislation. Naturally there is urged more dependence on the Church for the alleviation of evils, but prevailing the whole is a spirit remarkable for tolerance, sympathy, and appreciation of the condition of the world.

Such a diverse collection is bound to provoke criticism. This reviewer makes the accusation of brevity. It can easily be answered by providing more volumes of the same quality and variation.

CHARLES F. MULLETT.

University of Missouri.

BRIEF REVIEWS

A LECTURE ON LECTURES. Hogarth Lectures, No. 1. By Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. Pp. 60.

This, the initial volume of a new series of discussions of literary themes, is a sprightly and colloquial examination of the difficulties and advantages of the lecture method. The grace of its style, the profundity of its incidental comments, and the sane sweep of its scope make it not only an eminently profitable book for all lecturers and listeners to consider, but it demolishes much of the silly opposition current in so many places where lurk people who simply don't know how to lecture.

TRAGEDY: IN RELATION TO ARISTOTLE'S "POETICS". By F. L. Lucas. Hogarth Lectures on Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. Pp. 160.

With refreshing irreverence, Mr. Lucas re-examines Aristotle's theory of tragedy in a small book which consists of eight chapters. Scholastic deference, which has made Aristotle the Moses of the drama, handing down oracular and sententious dogmas, has very little place here. Out of his broad and humane study of the origins and developments of the Elizabethan drama, Mr. Lucas approaches his subject with a broader knowledge of dramatic purpose and effect than is usual in the commentator on Aristotle. After two highly suggestive chapters, "Aristotle and the Definition of Tragedy", and "The Emotional Effect of Tragedy", he proceeds to an analysis of five distinctive features of Aristotle's idea of Greek tragedy: the chorus, plot, character, diction and spectacle, and the three unities. In Lucas's book, Aristotle becomes a living mind, a contemporary; and the effect of reading it is to go back to Aristotle for a fresh and more intelligent reading of "The Poetics". Of no mean importance are the luminous contrasts frequently introduced from Shakespeare and other modern dramatists. Its easy and familiar style and its evidence of authentic knowledge make it indispensable to all who are concerned with the æsthetic theory of tragedy.

STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE. Hogarth Lectures on Literature. By Allardyce Nicoll. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. Pp. 168.

Apart from its defective title, Professor Nicoll's *Studies in Shakespeare* is altogether admirable. A more adequate title would have been "Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy", for the six lectures constitute what practically amounts to a supplement of Professor Bradley's studies in the same field. "I have looked upon the plays as experiments by him [Shakespeare] in different moods and methods", writes Professor Nicoll, "and have striven above all else to indicate the development or movement of his art as he passed from *Hamlet* to *Lear*" and to concentrate "on certain problems which seemed to me to have been either neglected or requiring further elaboration."

The introductory chapter on "Shakespearean Tragedy" needs only the contrast with Greek tragedy to make it the most adequate brief essay on the theme readily available for the general reader. Professor Nicoll's assertion of the dual conflict in the four great tragedies is challenging: that beneath the superficial and sensational conflicts of the plot there is an inner, more profound conflict in the souls of the chief characters. Though he points out the conditions of the theatre, and especially of the necessity for writing for Burbage, the author fails to note or discuss what to him may have been obvious: the relationship of the dual conflict in plot and character with the practical necessity of creating rôles for the chief tragic actor of the company.

For a fresh discussion of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, Professor Nicholl's book is extremely helpful.

POETRY AND MYTH. By Frederick Clarke Prescott. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 188.

Professor Prescott's new book is a worthy sequel to the well-known *The Poetic Mind* and, like its predecessor, is one of those books which haunt the reader long after he has finished it. Its theme is the *stuff* upon which the poetic mind operates and therefore supplies a supplement to Professor Prescott's treatment of the mental state of the poet given in the earlier book. Per-

haps the chief criticism of both books is that their author has not fully faced the simple fact that a poem is something which is written in words and that a poet is a writer who orders his words into certain patterns of emotion and sound.

AMERICAN INQUISITORS. A Commentary on Dayton and Chicago. By Walter Lipmann. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 120.

Some books which are written obviously lose interest when the times which called them forth have past. This is the fate of journalism and of books written in a journalistic spirit. Too much writing hath unbalanced that Walter Lipmann who, fifteen years ago, was the most promising of "The New Republic" group. The exigencies of "The New York World", which he has served as editor for some five years now, have made him less detached; more mixed up with the shifting currents of things. He also drifts, like those he criticised in that early book of his, *Drift or Mastery*.

American Inquisitors is a very sprightly series of lectures delivered at The University of Virginia. No doubt they were pleasant when they were heard; but they make dull reading. Lipmann falls in with the crowd who think in formulas: in this instance he has a formula for Dayton (the religious bigotry formula); and another for Chicago (the hyper-Americanism formula). He fails to read either formula in the light of its causes; and consequently fails to understand either the symptom or significance of fundamentalism or the anti-British crusade. His book is just another bit of propaganda — nice propaganda, to be sure, but still propaganda. Children cry for it.

THE STUDY OF LITERATURE. By Louise Dudley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1928. Pp. xii, 396.

According to Professor Louise Dudley, the study of literature should have a twofold aim: "knowledge and understanding of the great classics" and "knowledge of the standards of literature, or, better, the ability to give an intelligent account of one's literary

likes and dislikes" (p. v). In writing a sane, scholarly, simple, and comprehensive text-book that unites these two aims, the author is a pioneer. It is easy to find good interpretations of the great classics. It is almost equally easy to find learned discussions of the principles of literature. But if we have had an adequate undergraduate text-book combining these two, I am not acquainted with it.

In emphasizing principles, the author strikes at the weak spot in our teaching of literature. We have somehow taken principles for granted. But does the average undergraduate really get principles by inspiration? Is it not a fact that most of our students to-day leave college with only the vaguest notions of literary standards and principles? Nor is the author unduly theoretical. She has tried "to keep away from theory as theory and to use it only as an aid to the appreciation of literature" (p. v).

If I were to offer any adverse criticism of this timely book, I should say that it is rather too long. In particular, I believe that the psychological portions are unnecessarily lengthy and detailed.

But the book is unique, and should find a place on the shelf of every teacher and student of literature.

THEODORE STENBERG.

The University of Texas.

THE LYRIC SOUTH. By Addison Hibbard. New York: The Macmillan Company.

In the southern tier of the United States of America, poetry vies with "culture" as part of the lost cause. Every village and town has its laureate; and not a few large cities have healthy poetry societies. One would think that there was a regional competition in the production of poets. Feelings run high even between the poets themselves, for the pleasant unity of the past, established by Poe and Lanier, has badly disintegrated under the fierce scorn of Mr. Mencken of Baltimore.

Creative energy in verse was probably never so strong even in the South as it is today. Professor Hibbard of the University of North Carolina has very ably selected the best poems of the most authentic Southern poets in his *The Lyric South*. What distresses the less patriotic reader is that so few of the

poems stir emotions; and that the collection as a whole does not reveal any extraordinary infusion of intelligence or of freedom from over-worked themes and manners.

COLLEGE LIFE IN THE OLD SOUTH. By E. M. Coulter. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 359.

Although colleges have relatively little influence on the formation of opinion in the United States they do present a problem of our culture and civilization. They are hospitals for the nurture of conventional social standards in adolescents and, historically, are more important for arresting intellectual independence and solidifying complacencies than for any dynamic force which they exert. To discover the significant shapers of events there is far more to be learned by studying a history of the influence of printers and journalists like Whitman, Mark Twain, or Howells than in studying the history of any college in America, not excluding Yale, Harvard, or Princeton.

The very fact that American colleges were framed on the plan of the British public school before the reforms of the nineteenth century explains much of their impotency in American history. Hence these institutions have been flourishing for a century or so, uninterested in and untouched by the teeming life around them. They have been sacred places where lamas have lived as in a Forbidden City. But all this is now going by the board; and the few remaining colleges where the religion of "culture" persists have a charm and a quaintness which attract curiosity-seekers.

College Life in the Old South, though it narrates the secret history of The University of Georgia, is so piquantly written and is so blissfully oblivious to the absurdities of old-fashioned college life—in the South or in the North—that it makes unusually pleasant reading. It explains much that is hard to understand in the operations of mind and ways of behaviour in somewhat elderly college graduates everywhere. It is a valuable social document, not only in the history of American education, but in the vacancies of Southern thought.

THE INQUIRING MIND. By Zechariah Chafee, Jr. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1928.

"The Inquiring Mind" is the initial essay of this collection of some twenty-odd articles on political, civil, and social topics by an outstanding jurist-teacher. Professor Chafee criticizes the conservative and the radical alike, and asks of them to maintain a liberal attitude of mind, an inquiring, testing, accepting, or rejecting scientific intelligence. Court decisions, strike injunctions, freedom of speech, syndicalism, political intolerance, come under his keen legal review, and the appeal is at all times intellectual and objective, persuasive without the heat of the reformer and the sting of the special advocate. It is more than a demand for fair play. It implies that the preservation of the existing order is not an end in itself, that neither happiness nor power is the purpose of government, but liberty and justice for all classes. Perhaps our civilization would some day produce this type of inquiring administrator in law and politics; perhaps our destinies must always remain in the keeping of contending parties zealously committed to some *a priori* system of thought or altogether indifferent to thought.

JOHN WILKES BOOTH. Fact and Fiction of Lincoln's Assassination. By Francis Wilson. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company. Pp. 322.

The eminent actor who is the author of this book publishes the results of his investigations of the life and character of Lincoln's assassin: and critically examines the circumstances and motives which led to Booth's crime. The earnestness of the writer is perhaps too apparent; had he been more detached he would have written, perhaps, a more interesting book. Nevertheless no student of Lincoln can afford to ignore Mr. Wilson's book.